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SCHOOLS

Free lawn signs for high school seniors

By Jonah Snowden
jsnowden@turely.com

PALMER – To encourage and support the Class of 2020 at Palmer High School, where her son is also graduating, Palmer resident and photographer Betsy Martinez-Chacon is applying her very own design to 18x24 lawn signs for the graduates.

Chacon said that the idea for this came from learning that photographers from other states that have been providing similar opportunities.

Following this discovery, she got a head count of the 82 graduating students, worked on the design, conducted research, and spoke with her husband, Roberto Chaco, who both own the trucking business Chacon Trucking LLC, to sponsor the cost of the project, along with her Photography business, BMC Photography.

Chacon said that this is her first



Courtesy Photo

Palmer Resident and photographer Betsy Martinez-Chacon of BMC Photography is designing 18x24 lawn signs for graduating Palmer High Seniors.

time working with lawn signs and that she usually focuses on working on pictures and posters. The result of experimenting on this project with her own design was a presentable and weather-resistant lawn sign.

Regarding having the opportunity to provide this for graduating, Chacon said that she completely understands what each senior is going through and hopes that they appreciate these lawn signs and take pride in reaching the finish line that took

Please see **CHACON**, page 3



Courtesy Photos

The Wales Community Pantry, located at 85 Main St., has remained open to continue serving the communities Brimfield, Holland, and Wales.

Pantry continues to serve during COVID-19 pandemic

By Jonah Snowden
jsnowden@turley.com

WALES – The Wales Community Pantry, a non-profit organization that serves Brimfield, Holland, and Wales, is continuing to serve amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jean Smith, Director of the Pantry, said that they have been very busy and are still serving the type of people they usually aid, such as senior citizens, disabled veterans, and homebound clients.

Regarding preparing for the pandemic, Smith said that they “were very prepared for it.”

“We we’re luckier than some, only because I have friends that are in Italy, and was aware of what was going on,” said Smith. “Back in February, I made two trips to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, went out and purchased food and immediately filled out the pantry.”

To keep serving the public as safely as possible, Smith said that she encourages those

who need food to call ahead of time and set up an appointment to ensure people are not lined up in front of the pantry or have to wait an extended amount of time to get what they need and avoid contact with one another. She also said they have been doing a lot of delivering to homebound clients.

If anyone is interested in aiding the food pantry, Smith said that she would prefer to receive monetary donations instead of food, to avoid having to handle items that have not been

wiped down or are expired.

“[Monetary] donations really help us more than the food, because I get a lot of things that I don’t have a huge call for,” said Smith. She also that with monetary donations, she can purchase food by the case coming right from the manufacturer itself, and that this prevents a lot of handling of the items she gets for the pantry. “It makes life easier for us,” said Smith.

A few of the places Smith said that she gets food from is Arnold’s Meats in East

Longmeadow, where she recently purchased \$1,000 worth of meat from monetary donations, and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts in Hatfield.

As stated on their website, the mission of the Wales Community Pantry is to create access to good, healthy food in their community, and believes that that access to nutritious food is a basic human right and are committed to responding to the needs of their community through food distribution and support services.

To contribute to the pantry and help them continue to accomplish this mission through a monetary donation, schedule an appointment to pick up food at the pantry, or have it delivered to a home address, contact Smith on her cell phone, 774-200-4380, or her home phone at 413-245-4472.

Checks can be made out to the Wales Community Pantry, located at 85 Main St., below the Wales Senior Center. To



Canned goods and other necessities fill the shelves at the Wales Community Pantry.



he Wales Community Pantry's refrigerator keeps the produce nice and fresh.

learn more about the Food Pantry, <https://www.walescommunitypantry.com/>

COMMUNITY



Courtesy Photo

The Holland Community Center, located at 40 Brimfield Rd.

Community Center conducts outreach efforts

By Jonah Snowden
jsnowden@turley.com

HOLLAND – Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Holland Community Center is still going above and beyond to assist the seniors and general public.

One outreach effort involves the center holding a food drive every Thursday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. To ensure the food is clean, Director Brenda Palmer said that the they keep their food quarantined for a full week before donating it. “We wear masks and wash our hands after each donation,” said Palmer.

They have also assisted the

Wales Community Pantry, which is continuing to assist Brimfield, Holland and Wales.

“Knowing that for now our own lunch program is shut down, we wanted to help get food to where others can at least access it,” said Palmer. “To date we have had more than a truck bed full of food donations and almost \$400 in monetary donations, as well as 60 adult masks and 30 juvenile masks donated.”

In addition to assisting the Wales Community Pantry, Palmer said the Center has taken “very creative measures” to connect with

Please see **CENTER**, page 3

POLICE

Woman chased by van near Stafford Reservoir

By Elise Linscott
elinscott@turley.com

WALES – An 18-year-old woman was followed and cornered by a man in a van while jogging on Route 19 near Stafford Reservoir.

According to a story by news station WWLP, Wales Police Chief Earl Dessert said that on April 23 at 5 p.m., a man in a white van began driving back and forth next to the woman and “yelling sexually explicit things at her.”

He then allegedly attempted to block the woman against a guard rail with his van, according to WWLP.

The woman ran and hid in a neighboring yard until the suspect left the area, then called the police. The Wales Police Department and Connecticut State Police searched the area but were unable to locate the suspect or the van.

“The van is white with blue or black lettering on the driver’s side and was last seen heading north towards Wales,” according to the WWLP story. “The suspect is described as a white man with tan,



brown hair and brown eyes. Police say he is dirty looking, sweaty and was wearing a neon yellow green shirt.”

The Wales Police Department posted a sketch of the suspect from the victim’s account on its Facebook page. Dessert asked that anyone with information call Trooper Buck of the Connecticut State Police at (860) 684-3777.

COMMUNITY

Pandemic poses unique challenges for women, kids in Hampden County

By Elise Linscott
elinscott@turley.com

Many women and children in Hampden County have been challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic and physical distancing measures, from figuring out where to get resources like food and diapers to navigating substance abuse and violence at home or finding ways to access reproductive healthcare.

The Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls has been holding meetings and conducting polls through social media to find out what those

issues are and how commissioners can advocate for and connect those who are struggling to organizations that can help.

“I fear we won’t really know what women and girls deeply needed during this time until after, because women are really busy tending to the basic needs of their families today,” said Dawn DiStefano, commissioner and executive vice president at Square One in Springfield, a private nonprofit that provides early education, care and family support services. “They aren’t going to sound the alarm for themselves while they’re in the midst of this pandemic taking care of their families. I think as a community, it’s up to us to apply that hypervigilance to the work and the

effort we put into connecting with women during this time.”

Kids and young adults are also feeling the stress of the pandemic, often more than their parents realize. But children are also resilient, according to commissioners, and many want to help, including local Girl Scout troops who’ve been donating cookies and making window signs for seniors, said commissioner Pattie Hallberg, CEO of the Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts.

Girl Scouts

Kids aren’t immune to the worry and change they see around them, from completing classes and schoolwork online to seeing scary news on the TV while having their

parents home all the time. But Hallberg said she’s also seen many who want to get involved and contribute in any way they can.

“There’s a heightened sense of concern,” Hallberg said. “But what we’re finding at the Girl Scouts is so many of these girls are trying to figure out, ‘What can I do to help? What can I do as a person?’ They’re making masks, they’re delivering cookies to the fire department or the police department. They’re doing what they can to find some little way to make a difference. That makes them feel so much better.”

In Monson, for instance, Troop64811 made signs for a nursing home in Hampden to put in their windows to brighten their day.

Hallberg has heard from many

girls that they want to go back to school and that they miss the camaraderie of seeing their classmates and teachers. But they’re still finding ways to stay occupied and virtually connected to the outside world.

“There are so many cool things that they can do on the internet,” Hallberg said. “They can go to the opera, they can go to Broadway, they can take a virtual tour of our national parks, they can go to a science museum. In Girl Scouting, they’re earning badges and patches online, and it’s so fun to watch them earning badges and doing things that they might not have ever done before.”

Hallberg has also been encouraging families to get outside for fresh air and fun activities like scav-

enger hunts.

Square One

DiStefano said she and others on the commission have been working to build “a strong mental health safety net” in the community, in order to help everyone stay afloat.

“When we come up for a breath of air, those being willing to take a big gulp of air better be willing to dive back down and bring others to the surface,” DiStefano said. “I think a lot of women will be stuck in the weeds underwater. I think that’s where the commission can do its best work – we can rally around and find our allies in people to go out to check in on others.”

Please see **PANDEMIC**, page 6



Counting turtles



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TURTLE COUNT

Tish Schonback of Monson counted 13 turtles in the April 23rd Journal Register.

MONSON

Public notices on water and sewer bills, taxes

Water and Sewer Bills for usage period January through March 2020 are being mailed from the office of Monson Town Collector, Dorothy Jenkins.

These bills will be due and payable on Monday, June 1, 2020.

Questions on usage should be directed to the Water/Sewer Department at 413-267-4130. Questions on payments or payment arrangements should be directed to the Collector's Office at 413-267-4100, Ext. 6.

In dealing with the impact of COVID-19 on Local Government's Financial Health and wellbeing, the Monson Board of Selectmen at their meeting of Tuesday, April 14, 2020 voted unanimously to extend the due dates on Real Estate and Personal Property Tax payments and applications for exemptions, as outlined in Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020, Sections 10 and 11, until June 1, 2020. The Board also voted to waive interest and other penalty for late payment of any excise, tax, betterment assessment or apportionment, including water rate or annual sewer use, trash collection or other charge added to a tax for any payments with a due date on or after March 10, 2020 where payment is made late but paid on June 29, 2020. This waiver of interest does not apply to bills with due dates before March 10, 2020 or if the bill is not paid by June 29, 2020.

For further clarification regarding the adoption of these local options, please do not hesitate contact the offices of either the Monson Board of Assessor at 413-267-4100, Ext. 7 or the Office of the Monson Town Collector at 413-267-4100, Ext. 6.

Kievra, of Holland, Inducted into Psi Chi, the International Honor Society

WORCESTER -- Assumption's Department of Psychology has announced that Alyssa Kievra, of Holland, has become a member of Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology. Kievra, Class of 2021, was inducted into the honor society during the 2019-20 academic year.

"We are honored to induct some of the top psychology majors and minors at Assumption College into Psi Chi, including Alyssa," said Assistant Professor of Psychology Leamarie Gordon, Ph.D., who is a co-advisor of the honor

society along with Assistant Professor of Psychology Karen Lionello-DeNolf, Ph.D. "An invitation to join Psi Chi signifies that each inductee has not only exceeded academic requirements, but is also committed to the practice of compassionate service in the pursuit of helping others, which are core values shared by both an Assumption education and a career in psychology."

Psi Chi was founded with the purpose of encouraging, stimulating, and maintaining excellence in scholarship, and advancing the sci-

ence of psychology. Membership is open to graduate and undergraduate, of sophomore, junior, or senior academic standing, who major or minor in psychology. Inductees must have completed nine semester hours of psychology courses, rank in the top 35 percent of their class, and have a minimum grade point average of 3.25. Members of Psi Chi have the opportunity to submit scholarly articles to the Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research, apply for research grants, and attend and present at regional and national conferences.

One Conversation Can Make All the Difference

Sharing your wishes for end-of-life care can bring you closer to those you love

SPRINGFIELD — These are challenging times, and there are many things that are out of our control.

But there are some things we can do to help us be prepared — both for ourselves and the people we care about when it comes to making important life decisions.

April is National Healthcare Decisions Month and a time when people across the country are encouraged to get the conversation going about their wishes for end-of-life care. The annual event is sponsored by The Conversation Project, a program of the National Institute for Healthcare Advancement.

"It's all about being prepared for any healthcare emergency by understanding the value of advance healthcare planning. The goal is to reduce the number of tragedies that occur when a person's wishes are unknown, and improve the ability of healthcare facilities and providers to offer informed and thoughtful guidance about advance healthcare planning to their patients," said Dr. Diane Dietzen, medical director, Palliative Care Services at Baystate Medical Center.

The Conversation Project suggests three important things you can do immediately to make your wishes known:

1. Pick your person to be your health care decision maker.
2. Talk about what matters most to you.
3. Think about what you would want if you became seriously ill.

"The conversation needs to get going now, it's never too early," said Dr. Dietzen.

All adults over the age of 18 should have a healthcare proxy, so that they have a decision maker prepared in the case of an emergency or they are unable to speak for themselves.

According to a Survey of Californians by the California Healthcare Foundation and Kaiser Family Foundation Serious Illness in Late Life Survey, 92% of people say that talking with their loved ones about end-of-life care is important, but only 32% have actually done so and say that they haven't had the conversation because they don't want to upset their loved ones.

"These discussions are always hard to begin, but often are very rewarding and meaningful for your family and loved ones," said Dr. Dietzen.

Visit www.theconversationproject.org for a free Conversation Starter Kit.

Once you have had that important conversation, there are two important legal documents — a Health Care Proxy and Advance Directive — to complete in order to make sure that your wishes are clearly stated and respected when the time comes.

A *Health Care Proxy* is a simple legal document allowing you to name someone you know and trust to make healthcare decisions for you if, for any reason and at any time, you become unable to make or communicate those decisions.

An *Advance Directive*, also known as a Living Will, is a legal document in which you state your wishes regarding end-of-life medical care — including the types of treatments you do and do not want such as "do not resuscitate (CPR)" or "intubate" to help the patient breathe

— in case you are no longer able to make decisions or communicate your wishes.

According to Mass. Medical Society, Massachusetts is one of only three states that recognizes Health Care Proxies but does not recognize Living Wills. However, they say Living Wills are still potentially useful "because they guide agents and physicians about the types of choices a person would make."

Dr. Dietzen noted that is important to make sure the person you identify as your proxy is someone who understands your wishes.

"We often think of our spouse or parents as being able to make those decisions for us, but they may not be the right person because of the emotional burden their decision will carry. That's why it is so important to put your wishes in writing, and to select someone who is emotionally able to carry out your wishes and who can answer any questions the doctor may have about your care," she said.

"We are committed to ensuring that all adults with decision-making capacity have the information and opportunity to communicate and document their healthcare decisions. Making your wishes known in advance by completing a health care proxy and an advance directive is extremely helpful to physicians in knowing whose direction to follow in the event of family controversy over treatment, which could otherwise lead to the courts becoming involved," said Dr. Dietzen.

Visit the Medicare website for more information at www.medicare.gov/manage-your-health/advance-directives/advance-directives-and-long-term-care.html.

For more information on Baystate Health, visit baystatehealth.org.

Holyoke Community College plans 'epic celebrations' for class of 2020

HOLYOKE — In lieu of its traditional spring commencement ceremony at the Mass Mutual Center, Holyoke Community will instead recognize the class of 2020 with a virtual celebration in August and also invite graduates to walk across the stage next year with the class of 2021.

"Every year, one of my most anticipated moments is Commencement," President Christina Royal said in an email communication to students Friday. "As a first-generation college student, I remember how significant Commencement was for my family and me. I take great pride in joining you and your families in celebrating your achievements, and in shaking each of your hands as you walk across the stage. But as we have all

seen, the rapid spread of COVID-19 has changed nearly everything. It's no surprise that we will not be able to host this event in person on May 30."

We must balance our desire to celebrate your academic achievements in all the ways you were expecting with the need to keep our community healthy, which continues to be our highest priority," she said.

The new plan is for HCC to hold a virtual celebration in August, complete with special remarks, honors and recognition of graduates. Each member of the class of 2020 will receive a special surprise package in the mail during the summer and be invited to host their own celebrations to share through videos and photos using the hashtag #HolyokeCC20.

The exact date for the virtual celebration has not yet been determined.

Also, Royal said, "The class of 2020 will have a traditional Commencement in May 2021, where we will celebrate each of you, in person with your loved ones present, along with the class of 2021, on what will be a truly historic day."

Your perseverance toward graduation in these unprecedented times deserves to be celebrated in every way possible," she said. "On behalf of your faculty and the entire HCC community, I applaud you for your strength and resilience, and will look forward to seeing you virtually in August and at the Mass Mutual Center in May 2021. What epic celebrations these will be!"

DEADLINE

The Journal Register has changed its firm deadline for public submissions to Mondays. To get your submission in for that week's edition, email Editor at bcoulter@turley.com or call the office at 413-283-8393 by noon on Mondays. We appreciate the cooperation of our readers.

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Corrections

The Journal Register will gladly correct factual errors that appear in this paper. Corrections or clarifications will always appear on Page 2 or 3. To request a correction, send information to Editor at bcoulter@turley.com, or call 283-8393, extension 236. Corrections may also be requested in writing at: Journal Register, Attn: Editor 24 Water St., Palmer, MA, 01069.



Blood donations needed more than ever during the Coronavirus pandemic

Baystate Health moves its blood donor operation to Holyoke

SPRINGFIELD — As President Donald Trump left the White House briefing room recently during a coronavirus update, someone shouted out "donate blood!"

It was an important message. The need is so much that Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker included blood and platelet donors on his list of essential services issued recently.

America faces a severe blood shortage during the coronavirus pandemic and the U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams is urging healthy individuals to donate blood as the crisis unfolds.

Until further notice during the COVID-19 pandemic, Baystate Health is relocating all blood and platelet donation to 361 Whitney Ave. in Holyoke.

Blood donations will take place daily, Monday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are suggested and can be made by calling 413-794-4600.

Platelet donations will also occur at Whitney Avenue, but are by appointment only at 413-794-4600.

Additional protocols are being implemented during the coronavirus pandemic for the safety and health of donors, including:

- Prescreening donors
- Extra precautionary cleaning
- Spacing out donors to comply with social distancing and group gathering restrictions.

All eligible donors will receive a ticket to Six Flags (for future use, valid through Jan. 3, 2021 and a gift card to Big Y or Dunkin'.

Please contact the Baystate Health Blood Donor Center at 413-794-4600 with questions or to make an appointment.

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EMAIL
Advertising Sales
Lisa Marulli
lmarrulli@turley.com

Editor
Elise Linscott
elinscott@turley.com

Staff Writer
Jonah Snowden
jsnowden@turley.com

Subscriptions
cgrissold@turley.com

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We thought we would give you a quick update. First, we are happy to re-introduce weekly sales. We are cautiously optimistic that the market will slowly return back to its pre-Corona days. Until then our frozen items are proving to be the best value. We encourage you to give these items a try!
Second, we have posted throughout the store, on our website and on Facebook our health and safety rules. We kindly ask that you adhere to these in order to protect our customers and hard working staff. If you don't have access to or forgot your gloves no worries here! We are providing a pair of free gloves to each shopper as they enter the store. We are all in this together! Be well and stay safe!

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The Journal Register OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$100, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

CENTER I from page 1

their community.

"We have called almost all of our regular guests even if they are in other towns, asking if they have enough food, do they have friends or family that can help, do they have enough toilet paper, do they want weekly, even daily phone calls, and to give guidance on any resources local to them that we are aware of," said Palmer.

She also said that they went around to local seniors and residents to drop off bingo sheets and have online bingo through their Facebook page. Another program the Center is offering is Kitchen Manager Rose Alicea and her son Sammy Lamoureux's weekly cooking show on Facebook, which happens a few times a week.

"It gives our seniors some interaction to look at, and it gives teachers and students from Holland Elementary School a chance to connect," said Palmer. "One teacher recently moved to Texas and she is also watching the live feeds to feel connected back here."

Activities Coordinator Deb O'Connor has also been hosting Zoom open chats three times a week to let people have a safe chance to chat with other people and be there for anyone who is lonely.

O'Connor, said she has "mixed feelings" about being this predicament, since she misses seeing her regular visitors in person, and that "hearing the sadness in their voices" makes the outreach efforts hard to do. "I want them to know that they're loved, and that we're here for them," said O'Connor.

Regarding other ways they are aiding seniors, Palmer said that they have been helping them get prescriptions, masks and puzzles, buying them take-out from restaurants such as Diane's Villa Nova and Holland's Maine Attraction, and a tray of pansies to give them something to plant.

On April 23, the center worked with a small business in Spencer, Bemis Farms, to get 30 mystery flowers kits to their seniors through a plant pick up event. "About four times a year we work with Bemis and the last two workshops had to be cancelled due to a snowstorm one time and COVID-19 this time. To see the 30 people, stop by and for some to say we are the first contact they had in five weeks, was amazing."

The center is regularly providing updates of what they're doing on their Facebook page. To learn more about what the center has been up to, visit their Facebook page, go to the town webpage, or receive weekly updates by emailing activities@Holland.org. The center is located at 40 Brimfield Rd. and can be reached at 413-245-3163.

CHACON I from page 1

four years to cross.

"I feel devastated, and this is why I wanted to honor them," said Chacon. "I know that they're missing out on a lot and are heartbroken. It's just a shame and I thought that this would be the best way to recognize them, and to show them support and let them know we're thinking about them."

Roberto Chacon also said that he is happy to play a part in helping the students still celebrate graduating high school.

"I just hope that they know that we know they're missing out on a lot and we're there to support them and let them know that they're not alone," said Chacon. "Whether the case is that they have the graduation or not, they always have support, but in the bad pandemic that we're in now, everybody feels left out. So, I'm just trying to do my best to help out in any way."

The deadline to submit a request for a lawn sign is Monday, May 4, since she will need time to process the orders and get them back as soon as possible. Chacon's email address is bmcphotography@comcast.net. Student information must be included in the email.

Regarding the sign pickup process, Chacon said that when the time comes for people to pick up their signs, there will be very little contact, and she will be wearing a mask and gloves.

Since 2009, Chacon has been worked as a photography in various settings: individuals, couples, families, and weddings, green screen, and more. Under BMC Photography, she is the sole photographer, editor, and processor and works out of her very own insured studio. To learn more about BMC photography, visit <https://bit.ly/2zHk5qB> or her Facebook page, <https://bit.ly/3aGbxNb>.

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**Journal
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Longstanding problems at Soldiers' Home

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE - The halls of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke have served as the final battleground for more than 70 veterans stricken by COVID-19, who have lost their lives over the past 50 days.

The facility has drawn the ire of many due to the spread of the highly contagious Covid-19 that overwhelmed the facility. As of April 22, another 84 living residents and 81 employees are fighting the novel coronavirus.

Several individuals close to the situation are adamant the tragedy was avoidable. Veterans' organizations had reportedly been requesting more funding and additional staffing long before the outbreak.

"When this happened, they couldn't have been prepared for it. There were too many men sharing the same bathrooms; too many men in the same room. They didn't have enough staff, and when staff got sick and couldn't show up, they didn't have any reserves," said Steve Connor, director of the Central Hampshire Veterans' Services.

Funding

Alongside the families of residents, Connor has advocated for the facility to get additional resources, noting staff was reduced in 2015. The building's former superintendent, Paul Barabani, pushed hard to improve conditions before subsequently being pushed into retirement himself in December 2015, said Connor.

Others share a different narrative. From fiscal 2015 to fiscal 2020, the facility's funding was increased by 14 percent and the average amount spent on each resident increased by 11 percent, said Brooke Karanovich, representing the home as part of the state's Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

It is also Karanovich's understanding that employees who retired in 2015 were able to do so as part of the early retirement incentive program, a statewide program that wasn't specific to the Soldiers' Home.

"It was a statewide offer that was made to state employees who met certain criteria to be eligible. They could choose to retire early and get some sort of extra benefit," said Karanovich.

In the meantime, Superintendent Bennett Walsh has come under fire since being placed on administrative leave effective

March 30. His responsibilities have temporarily been assumed by Val Liptak, RN, currently the CEO of Western Massachusetts Hospital.

Karanovich emphasized disciplinary action against Walsh not yet been taken, and several investigations remain ongoing.

On April 1, Gov. Charlie Baker launched an investigation and Attorney General Maura Healey announced an investigation about a week later. A federal investigation was also launched by U.S. Attorney Andrew Lelling on April 10.

Walsh's termination

Brian Willette, South Hadley resident and state commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, believes Walsh has unfairly become the public face of the incident after inheriting a flawed operation.

"As far as I'm concerned, Bennett Walsh is the second superintendent in a row to ask for help from the state and not receive it," said Willette.

Walsh maintained he alerted the state after the first Soldiers' Home resident tested positive on March 21, but Baker said he was not notified until well afterwards, sparking the investigations.

Without declaring Walsh's innocence outright, Willette lent the man his support. Willette and his peers have a personal connection to the facility; the Soldiers' Home has served as a meeting ground for the Military Order of the Purple Heart since 2013, and a number of members reside in the home.

"At this very moment, there are several investigations going on. We need to see the results of those investigations. Simultaneously, the trustees are working to fire the current superintendent, I feel without due process," said Willette.

Willette alleges that Soldiers' Home trustees endeavored to fire Walsh, but a court-issued restraining order delayed the process until at least next month. Acknowledging the court action, Karanovich denies that the trustees attempted to execute Walsh's termination.

Connor, on the other hand, believes Walsh never should have been given the job to begin with. Connor, who is responsible for enrolling veterans in the home, recalls being immediately alarmed when Walsh assumed the position following Barabani's departure.

"The reality was that he didn't have any background in



Turley Publications file photo

Soldiers' Home in Holyoke has seen the death of 70 veterans from COVID-19 in the last 4 days or so.

running a facility," said Connor. "He was a proud Marine who served very honorably, but never ran a facility like this. He came in under those circumstances [of staffing reductions], which kind of made me worried. Over the couple of years that have followed, staffing has continued to be an issue."

To express his dismay, Connor released a memo in 2017 to outline the "concerns of veterans, their family members and the staff of the Holyoke Soldiers' Home and the members of the Western Massachusetts Veterans Service Officers Association."

The document continued to note that "the major concern that has been brought to our attention, is for the health and safety of the veterans who live there." The memo highlights issues such as poor staffing, an ineffective governing structure and lackluster conditions inside of the facility.

Employee compensation and staffing

Employee compensation has also been seemingly problematic. In 2017, the staff of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke was paid \$40,727 on-average while employees at the Chelsea Soldiers' Home earned an annual salary of \$66,638.

The difference of more than \$25,000 is representative of the Holyoke facility's lack of "skilled nurses," according to the report and may have contributed to the recent outbreak. Connors believes that many families have been afraid to voice complaints because the

state might shutter the facility.

"From everything that I've heard from the nurses and the families in there, it was already bad. Having this [outbreak] happen only amplified it," said Connor. "It's really been an ongoing problem; the staffing level, the morale and the staff having to work forced overtime."

Prior to the outbreak, Connor met with a number of local and state legislators to discuss the issue. Willette too is adamant there has been a history of understaffing and underfunding at the Soldiers' Home.

"There's a need for more assistance up there; there's a need for more money, more staffing, better housing conditions and they've known that," said Willette. "From the veterans organizations' perspective, this is what we fight for; staffing and funding. With staffing shortages, they cannot properly care for these veterans. Does that mean a bigger budget? Yes, it does."

Last month, it took multiple days for the public to be informed the first Soldiers' Home residents had succumbed to Covid-19. Connor was in the building that week to complete a charitable endeavor; he explained what haunts him most about how the incident unfolded.

"While I was there, two veterans were given farewells going out in the hearse. When they go out, so do all of the nurses and all of the staff. When it was unknown that veterans were dying that first weekend in March, I heard about it from friends

and said, 'Well how would nobody know that?' Then it came out that there was a refrigerator truck in the back of the building," said Connor.

"Nothing could have done more to hurt the families and all the veterans to know that because always they go out with honors out the front door," he said. "They even play taps. It just was such a heartbreaking thing that they had gone out the backdoor and put in a refrigerator truck."

Connor considers the building's employees to be courageous and thanked them for their tireless effort and commitment to local veterans. He acknowledged that, like front line responders across the country, they have performed admirably amid dangerous circumstances.

It will take years for the Soldiers' Home to fully rebound from the outbreak that has occurred within its walls; Connor noted that approximately 25 percent of the residents are now dead.

He did voice optimism that the building will rise from the ashes and serve veterans for many more years to come.

"It's always been the gem on the hill here for us in Western Mass; it's now not that, but it can be again if people just pay attention and support it the way that it needs to be supported," he said. "There's going to be a long time of recovery, and we need to keep an eye on it so this never happens again."

Dalton Zbierski can be reached at Dzbierski@turley.com.

Mass2-1-1 reaches 50,000 calls related to COVID-19

SPRINGFIELD, MA — On April 24, Mass2-1-1 and its Call2Talk emotional support and suicide prevention hotline reached over 50,000 calls related to COVID-19. Mass2-1-1 is a program created and staffed by the United Ways of Massachusetts and designated by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency as the official hotline for COVID-19.

"All of us at United Way and Mass2-1-1 are proud of our Mass2-1-1 and Call2Talk call takers for doing such an outstanding job over these last 50,000 COVID-19 related calls from the citizens of the Commonwealth. As time goes on calls are becoming much more stressful and emotional, so stay

strong team!" said Paul Mina, executive director of Mass2-1-1.

Any resident of Massachusetts with questions about COVID-19 or needs such as unemployment or food caused by the pandemic can call 2-1-1 at any time, from any phone in Massachusetts, in over 150 languages.

About United Way of Pioneer Valley

United Way of Pioneer Valley mobilizes people and resources to strengthen our communities. We target the community's most pressing needs and focus resources, community partnerships, and the energy of volunteers to create measurable results. For more information, visit uwpv.org.

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Viewpoints

How Congress has changed

By Lee H. Hamilton
Guest columnist

If you feel like Congress has become less productive, less functional, and more partisan... you're right. I've been thinking a lot lately about how it's changed over the years since I served there in the '60s to the '90s, and several issues help explain why it often struggles to get things done.

Heightened partisanship may top the list. Congress has always been a partisan organization; we've seen tense battles throughout its history. But now they're more intense and occur more frequently. Members tend to see issues predominantly, though not completely, through a partisan lens.

This is reflected in their voting patterns. In the 1960s and 1970s, votes in which a majority of one party opposed a majority of the other occurred roughly one-third to one-half the time. Starting in the early '90s, that percentage rose into the 60 and 70 percent range. Add to this increasingly split control of Congress, with one party controlling the House and the other the Senate, and agreement becomes exceedingly difficult to find.

In many ways, this reflects the country at large. Though identification with a party or as an independent has tended to move a few percentage points over time, Americans of each party seem ever more firmly stuck in their own camps. It has become more difficult to resolve our differences, and this has undoubtedly contributed to congressional gridlock.

Years ago, the question that pervaded discussions on Capitol Hill was, "What can we do to resolve this problem?" Members were unwilling to accept stalemate or lack of agreement. Leaders at the time—people like Carl Albert and Tip O'Neill on the Democrats' side and Bob Michel and John Anderson on the Republicans'—certainly had partisan differences, but these did not dominate the discussion. Behind closed doors they would discuss them civilly and politely, even going so far as to share private polling numbers.

At the same time that polarization has increased, Congress's ambition has generally lessened. It's almost inconceivable today that Congress would tackle a big issue—say, how to provide health care for older people—by trying to create something like Medicare. You see this same trend in oversight of the executive branch. There were committee chairmen who knew the ins and outs of the departments they oversaw down to the finest detail. They would spend days grilling administration witnesses (of even their own party), creating an extensive record of what an administration and its political appointees were trying to accomplish—in information that helped ordinary Americans understand and judge the government's approach. That is much harder to find today.

I think you can also detect the same trend at work in a diminishment of Congress's oratorical ambitions. There was a time when members of Congress on both sides of the aisle considered Congress to be equal in stature to the President and the executive branch, and their speech-making reflected this: they saw strong oratory as a chance to encapsulate ideas and inspire Americans to rally behind them.

A key thing to remember is that this wasn't just the speaker of the House or the majority leader of the Senate. Power and influence were spread more widely across both chambers. As the leadership in recent years has come to dominate the process, ordinary members find far fewer chances to shine. The collapse of what was known as the "regular order," the committee work and amendment process that allowed ordinary members to participate in the deliberative work of Capitol Hill, has thoroughly concentrated power in the hands of leaders and made Congress less representative as a whole.

That trend has been accentuated by the extent to which money now talks at every stage of the process. It's not just that members are constantly trying to raise campaign funds. It's that the mix of who funds those campaigns has changed dramatically. In the late 1970s, according to the Brookings Institution's Vital Statistics on Congress, labor and corporate PACs gave about equally. Now, corporate PACs account for the vast majority of all the money flowing to members' campaigns.

The result of all this? Congress is still a vital part of our democracy, but it is by most measures a less effective one.

Lee Hamilton is a senior advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

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Starting annual flowers indoors

This past Saturday my daughters and I completed our annual seed starting ritual. First, we gathered all of the brightly-colored packets of flower seeds I had accumulated, and with them all sprawled out in front us, started writing out labels on old Popsicle sticks. Both the girls have their own little flower plot in the garden; it's always fun to see what varieties make the "cut" so to speak.

Then I found a good selection of clean, reused containers: six-packs from plants I purchased last year, former yogurt or take-out ice cream cups and other such containers, and filled them with moist potting soil. We usually sow one or two seeds per cell or cup, depending on the gusto of the plant sown. This year, my favorite seed starting mix is the Coast of Maine brand. I purchased it at Hardwick Farmer's Co-op, in Gilbertville, no-contact style by calling and paying ahead.

Once the seeds are sown we put all of the containers in a tray covered loosely with a clear plastic bag and placed it in a warm spot. Once they germinate I'll make sure to keep them in a sunny window, or better yet put them outside in a sheltered by sunny spot if the weather cooperates. They won't be transplanted into the garden until the chance of frost has passed, usually by Memorial Day, and after they have been acclimatized to the outdoors by a period of hardening off.

Bachelor's button or cornflower: Could the first name come from the fact that this flower fits perfectly into a button hole? Or maybe it's popularity as a boutonniere flower? No matter, kids will love them because of their two-inch delicate blooms in pretty shades of blue, pink, lavender, maroon and white. Plants can grow anywhere from one to three feet tall and are rather lanky in appearance. For that reason they can be spaced at just six inches apart. They often peter out in the heat, so resow in late June for blooms well into the fall.

Calendula or pot marigold: Long prized for its medicinal qualities, we all love calendula because of its bright yellow or orange flowers. Depending on variety, the petals on these beauties can be single, semi-double or fully double, and can

have contrasting dark eyes. Most top off at less than two feet tall. They are subtly fragrant. Plant 10 inches apart. Cut spent blooms to keep the plant producing and with any luck you could see flowers past the first fall frost. Do let a few flowers fade on the plant, and when they are completely dry and the color of straw, let the kids examine and pull apart the tightly-packed seed cluster. Put some in a jar, label, and save like my mom did for sowing next year.

Marigolds: We either "love 'em or hate 'em," probably because of their smell. Kids always seem to steer to the former. First off, the easy to handle seeds are really cool because they're black and white and have tails! They come up easily and bloom

for most of the summer even in drought. Of the three species most commonly sold, stick with either the French or the African for bouquet making. French types are best for the edge of the border, growing only about a foot tall. African marigolds usually grow anywhere from two to three feet tall depending on variety. Plant six inches apart for the shorter types and at least a foot apart for the taller varieties.

Zinnias: My absolute favorite summer flower in the world! Some say gaudy, I say cheerful. The dahlia-flowered variety 'Benary's Giant' has flowers in every color but blue. They regularly top four inches across. Plant these in the back of the border at least one foot apart. A bouquet of these would certainly deserve a pretty vase and prominence on the window sill.

Why not forgo buying transplants this year and start some flowers from seed? It is a lot of fun to see the process full circle, from seed to flowers and then to seed again. The varieties I have outlined below are great for beginners or children, but even old pros will enjoy these and many other types come mid-summer.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.



IN THE GARDEN
Roberta McQuaid
Columnist

When it all came out in the wash

Can innocence work along with ignorance? As a young wife and mother of two active children under five years of age, lessons were learned amid simple, everyday chores such as laundry.

Could washable, grey business dress slacks hang out somewhere in the category of lessons learned? Unimpressive. Well, then, could it be that a tall man's grey business suit slacks, requiring professional dry cleaning-- were left high and dry?

Once upon a time, a young wife and mother of two active children under five years of age, was asked to participate in several creative tests and recorded interviews by her friend Lois, who was completing her Master's Degree in Psychology.

What was the topic for this session? Perhaps, this time, the interview was about some of the normal, everyday events that contribute to leaping through life on the home front. If memory recalls correctly, one of the most memorable interviews went something like this:

"As a young wife and mother, what were some of your most challenging moments this week?"

"Tackling loads of laundry."

"Hmmm. Why was that routine job so rough?"

"Had to separate mountains of wash into colored, dark, and white piles."

"Umm. Triple duty. Do you have a dryer? Or do you have to hang laundry outside?"

"Yup. Sure do! We've got a dandy dryer." And, the young mother of two active children under five years of age muffled her giggles.

The Interviewer abruptly stopped as the Interviewee nearly collapsed with laughter. The Counselor-to-be stopped the recording. Finding the giggles contagious, she asked,

"What's so funny about your dryer?" Putting down her pen, pushing aside her notes, Lois asked, "What happened?"

"I washed, dried, folded the laundry and put it away. Then I hung the clothes that didn't need ironing in bedroom closets."

"And..."

"Well.—by all appearances—when The Hub grabbed his business suit... Well, the matching grey pants were washed and dried in the dryer instead of being dry cleaned..."

Gasp. Silence. Then table-slapping, rib-holding, heads-back laughter rocked the room.

Sheepishly the young wife and mother of two active children under five years of age continued: "I honestly didn't realize my mistake—even when I hung the slacks up in the closet. Umm. He must not have realized it either, especially during the early morning hours."

"Until..."

"When my well-over six-feet-tall hubby got dressed for work, he didn't notice anything unusual. But, when I saw him-- his pant leg cuffs were above ankles. "

Giggles. Breath-bursting laughter. Trickling tears. Motherhood. Sisterhood.

Lost for words-- the young wife and mother of two active children under five years of age, wasn't sure how to explain the mix-up. The problem of distinguishing, (amid chasing children and chores), between the washable permanent-press, light-grey slacks, and the dry-clean-only, light-grey business suit slacks. And, yet, as always--The Hub understood.

Yet, somehow the Interviewer and the Interviewee, both being young mothers, understood how lessons and laughter can erupt from committing acts with innocence and ignorance. And, even with laundry mix-ups – the truth being told – that undeniable evidence showed up when it all came out in the wash.



GUEST COLUMNIST
JOAN E. B. COOMBS

Election letters to the editor welcome

The Journal Register welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Journal Register, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to dfarmer@turley.com. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that Thursday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election.

For more information, call editor Douglas Farmer at 413-283-8393.

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers.

Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact Lisa Marulli, 413-283-8393 or lmarrulli@turley.com, about paid advertising in The Journal Register.

Letters to the editor policy

Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less in length, and guest columns between 500-800 words. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require that the person submitting the opinion also include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We must confirm authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, or defamation of character.

Please send opinions to:
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The submission deadline for consideration is Monday at noon.

Surviving the ladders of Mt. Willey

By Julie Midura

As many people have turned to nature during these unprecedented times, it has become significantly more challenging to social distance when the trailheads are packed with cars and the trails are crowded with people who just want to get outside for fresh air and exercise. Many states have issued stay at home orders, and hikers are being urged to stay 'low and local.' It is strongly recommended that people avoid traveling to other states to recreate at this time, as well as to avoid the larger, more challenging peaks in an effort to minimize the likelihood of being injured and needing a rescue.

Tom and I are happy that we were able to get one final winter ascent of a 4,000-foot peak last month, just days before the stay at home order was implemented in Massachusetts. On the last full weekend of winter, we headed to the White Mountains of New Hampshire to climb Mt. Willey, elevation 4,285 feet. It would be the 34th four thousand-footer that we had climbed in winter. Little did we know on that beautiful day in mid-March that it would also be the last time we would be heading to New Hampshire to hike for quite some time. Just days later, our nation was in a State of Emergency due to Coronavirus.

The first 1.6 miles was a beautiful walk in the woods on the



snow-packed Ethan Pond and Willey Range Trail. A solo hiker came up behind us and passed us, but was soon heading back towards us. He told us that the snow and ice-covered ladders were too dangerous to ascend. But we noticed that he was wearing micro-spikes on his feet, while we were wearing crampons. Since our traction was more aggressive, we assumed that we'd have no problem making it up the steep section that he was referring to. In addition to wearing crampons, we were also carrying our 'never-used-before-but-watched-several-YouTube-videos' ICE AXES!

We were making great time, and frankly, were feeling rather confident due to our aggressive footwear and the shiny new ice

axes strapped to our backpacks. But reality slapped us in the face when we reached the snow- and ice-covered ladders. We had climbed this mountain before during the summer, so we knew that there were eleven wooden ladders beneath all of that snow and ice. Those ladders had made it possible to ascend this section of the trail... when the rungs had actually been visible and before winter's fury had completely obliterated them. To give you a clearer idea of just how steep this section is; if you stand up and reach your arms straight out in front of you at shoulder level, you would be touching the trail that is normally under your feet.

I took a deep breath, stepped forward, and said "There but for

the grace of God go I." I plunged the shaft of my ice axe through the ice and began kick-stepping up the slope. Tom was about twenty feet in front of me, doing the same thing. I managed to make it up twenty feet or so when I suddenly was unable to get my crampons to bite into the ice. And that's when the terror set in. I froze, and thought 'What am I doing? I'm going to DIE just to bag a peak?!' I yelled up to Tom, "I don't think I can make it up this! And I'm terrified to go back down."

Tom yelled down to me to try to work my way over to the side of the trail, as he had done. He would head down to help me and we would turn back.

I looked to my right and to my left, searching for a tree that was close enough to grab onto. There were none within reach. I remained still for a moment, breathing deeply to calm myself from the panic that was overtaking my mind. I decided to use the adze of my ice axe to chop steps into the slope. (Another technique I had seen on YouTube.) I was then able to kick my toes into the slope and, going hand over hand, work my way over to the woods on the right side of the trail.

Once I reached the woods, I grabbed onto the nearest tree trunk until my heart began beating normally again. It was then that my courage kicked in. Okay... maybe it wasn't courage. It may

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The Journal Register

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PATRICK H. TURLEY
CEO

KEITH TURLEY
President

EDITOR
Elise Linscott
elinscott@turley.com

STAFF WRITER
Jonah Snowden
jsnowden@turley.com

ADVERTISING SALES
Lisa Marulli
lmarrulli@turley.com

SPORTS EDITOR
Greg Scibelli
sports@turley.com

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WEB
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SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

Can my husband get a spouse benefit from me?

By Russell Gloor
Guest columnist

Dear Rusty: I'm wondering if my husband can submit a "restricted application for spousal benefits only." He is 76-years-old, has been receiving his benefit since 2005. His present benefit is \$263.50. I am 74-years-old, receiving my benefit since 2007. My present benefit is \$931. Am I to understand that he could be receiving half of my amount rather than his smaller amount? Signed: Inquiring Wife

Dear Inquiring Wife: Your husband isn't eligible to file a "restricted application for spousal benefits only" because he is already collecting his own Social Security benefits and because he is past 70 years of age. But he should probably be receiving a spousal benefit from you because his benefit is so much lower than yours. From what you've written, you both claimed your Social Security benefits when you were 62 years of age. That means you both took a 25 percent cut in benefits from what you would have gotten at your full retirement age of 66.

Spousal benefits are based upon FRA benefit amounts, even if you claimed benefits earlier. So, since your FRA benefit amount would have been about \$1,164 and your husband's FRA benefit would have been about \$330, by my calculations he should now be receiving a spousal benefit of about \$516 instead of his benefit of \$263.50. The computation for that is: Take half of your FRA benefit amount (\$582) minus your husband's FRA benefit amount (\$330); the difference (\$252) is added to his own current benefit (\$264) to get \$516 as his possible spousal benefit (note the actual numbers from Social Security may vary somewhat). This probably means that when you claimed your benefit two years after your husband claimed his, your husband didn't apply for his spousal benefit (and it wasn't awarded automatically by Social Security).

I suggest your husband contact Social Security as soon as possible and make an appointment to apply for his spousal benefits. Since he has been entitled to that benefit for some time now, he can also request six months of retroactive spousal benefits which they will pay in a lump-sum and adjust his monthly benefit to what he is entitled to as your spouse. There is also a possibility that, when you filed, Social Security failed to notify your husband he was eligible for a spouse benefit, in which case he may be able to collect his spouse benefit back to the date he became eligible. Your husband should contact Social Security directly at either 1-800-772-1213, or at your local office (find it at www.ssa.gov/locator) to make an appointment to apply for his spousal benefit from you. And, usually, this application can be accomplished over the phone.

Please note that all of the above assumes that your husband's current benefit isn't being reduced due to a non-covered pension which causes the Windfall Elimination Provision to lower his benefit amount, and which would cause the Government Pension Offset to severely alter, or even eliminate, his spousal benefit.

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Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

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For more information on business coverage for The Journal Register, please email dfarmer@turley.com.

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Police/Fire

Police Logs

PALMER

The Palmer Police Department responded to a total of 265 calls on April 20 through April 27. The Department made 10 arrests or summons. Those arrested will appear at a future date in the Palmer District Court and are innocent until proven guilty.

Monday, April 20

Gage D. Costa, 19, of 4 North St., Three Rivers, was arrested at 8:54 p.m. on Bridge

Street in Three Rivers, on charges of being a minor transporting/carrying/possessing an alcoholic beverage; possession of a Class B Drug; a marked lanes violation; and a defective exhaust.

Anthony Ryan Harnois, 20, of 4 North Street, Three Rivers, was arrested at 8:54 p.m. on Bridge Street in Three Rivers, on charges of the possession of a Class B drug; and being a minor transporting/carrying/possessing an alcoholic beverage.

Wednesday, April 22

Matthew A. Headly, 24, of 8 Elm St., Leominster, was arrested at 12:14 p.m. on Spring Street in Palmer, for three arrest warrants.

Friday, April 24

Tracie L. Wood, 46, of 7 Memory LN., Palmer, was arrested at 7:40 p.m. on Memory Lane in Palmer, on charges of operating under the influence of liquor; negligent operation of a motor vehicle; and operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.

Sunday, April 26

Ryan A. Szafranski, 30, of 10 Orchard St., Palmer, was arrested at 9:35 p.m. on North Main Street in Palmer, for distributing a Class A drug.

Jason M. Delabruere, 36, of 1509 NM St. Apt. #14, Palmer, was arrested at 9:35 p.m. on North Main Street in Palmer, for the possession of a Class A drug.

MONSON

The Monson Police Department responded to a total of 152 calls on Apr. 19 through Apr. 25. The Department made five arrests or summons. Those arrested will appear at a future date in the Palmer District Court and are innocent until proven guilty.

Sunday, April 19

Danielle E. Koziol, 39, was arrested on 4 Wood Hill Rd., Monson was arrested at 11:45 a.m. for a straight warrant.

Fire Logs

PALMER

The Palmer Fire Department responded to a total of 12 calls from April 22 through April 28.

On Wednesday, April 22, at 3:40 a.m., the department responded to a call that was dispatched and called while en route on Hill Street in Thorndike. The department returned to service at 3:53 a.m.

On Wednesday, April 22, at 9:44 a.m., the department responded to an alarm activation on Knox Street. The department returned to service at 9:51 a.m.

On Wednesday, April 22, at 11:39 a.m., the department provided medical assistance on Ware Street. The department returned to service at 12:04 p.m.

On Wednesday, April 22, at 4:40 p.m., the department responded to a power line down on Rondeau Road. The department returned to service at 5:23 p.m.

On Thursday, April 23, at 6:02 p.m., the department provided medical assistance on Beacon Street. The department returned to service at 6:34 p.m.

On Friday, April 24, at 7:34 p.m., the department conducted a smoke removal on Thorndike Street. The department returned to service at 9:55 p.m.

On Saturday, April 25, at 12:00 a.m., the department responded to a dumpster fire on Park Street. The department returned to service at 12:58 a.m.

On Saturday, April 25, at 3:15 a.m., the department provided medical assistance on Walnut Street. The department returned to service at 3:20 a.m.

On Saturday, April 25, at 8:10 p.m., the department provided medical assistance on North Main Street. The department returned to service at 8:21 p.m.

On Monday, April 27, at 12:09 p.m., the department responded to a carbon monoxide detector malfunction on Buckland Street. The department returned to service at 12:30 p.m.

On Monday, April 27, at 10:21 p.m., the department provided medical assistance on Fletcher Street. The department returned to service at 10:50 p.m.

On Tuesday, April 28, at 3:34 a.m., the department responded to a motor vehicle accident with a fluid spill on Wilbraham Street. The department returned to service at 4:44 a.m.

THREE RIVERS

The Three Rivers Fire Department responded to no calls for this week.

BONDSDVILLE

The Bondsville Fire Department responded to a total of two calls from April 21 through April 27.

AAA supports first responders, health care providers with roadside assistance

REGION – In an effort to support our local first responders and front-line health care providers, AAA Pioneer Valley will provide them roadside assistance free of charge through April 30th.

AAA will provide the following services:

- Waive fuel delivery fee
- Cover the first \$100 of locksmith service
- Provide an additional \$10 discount

off price of battery for AAA Members

- Waive hookup and/or mileage fees
- Waive charge for the first hour of extrication service

First responders and front-line health care providers, whether members or non-members are asked to identify themselves during their call and provide the proper credentials such as I.D. badge or other identification when the service provider arrives, and these fees will not be collected. The exception will be for

battery replacement charges. To help with social distancing, AAA will also return the vehicle after repairs are made.

AAA would like to thank the many first responders and healthcare professionals who are assisting our communities during this crisis. This is a small way we can show our appreciation.

For more information please visit AAA.com/COVID-19 or the AAA Pioneer Valley Facebook page. To contact us for service or assistance with any

AAA product or service please call us at 413-785-1381. Our doors may be closed but the great majority of our services are available and our employees stand ready to assist.

AAA Pioneer Valley is a not-for-profit auto club with 6 offices in Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire counties of Massachusetts providing more than 200,000 local AAA members with travel, insurance, finance, and auto-related services.



CLUES ACROSS

1. Curved symmetrical structure
5. One's partner in marriage
11. Male admirer
12. Spend in a period of dormancy
16. Popular Easter meal
17. Doc
18. Bearing a heavy load
19. Gratitude
24. The Mount Rushmore State
25. Driving
26. Girl
27. British thermal unit
28. Makes a mistake
29. A defined length of time
30. Lions do it
31. Large quantities
33. Become less intense
34. Famed peninsula
38. Emerges
39. Rare Hawaiian geese

CLUES DOWN

1. Remove body tissue
2. Harvester
3. Roadside living quarters
4. Excessive self-confidence
5. Lapp
6. Bicycled
7. Entrance to a passage
8. Western U.S. state
9. Grain towers
10. "Westworld" actress
13. Commercial
14. One who left a will
15. Makes it through
20. Within (prefix)
21. Sea patrol (abbr.)
22. Cigarettes (slang)
23. A doctrine
27. Constrictor snakes
29. Atomic #73
30. Baseball stat
31. Female sibling
32. A soft gray metal (abbr.)
33. Southern constellation
34. Belgian city
35. Go in again

36. In a different, more positive way
37. A place for sleeping
38. Blood type
40. Syrian news agency (abbr.)
41. A salt or ester of acetic acid
42. Mililhenry
44. Populous Israeli city
45. Widen
46. Magical potion
47. Acknowledging
48. Private romantic rendezvous
50. Cavalry sword
51. Terabyte
52. Artificial intelligence
54. Bullfighting maneuver
55. Breezed through
57. Santa says it three times
61. ... and behold
62. 36 inches (abbr.)

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POSTPONEMENT:

We are so sorry but our May Scrabble Night and our May Basket Raffle will be postponed. At this time we are uncertain as to when they will be rescheduled.

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MIAA

Spring sports officially cancelled

Following the governor's closure of schools for the remainder of the year, spring sports will not happen

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – After weeks of speculation back and forth, the high school sports world got the sad news it had been dreading.

Last Friday, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association's Board of Directors was forced unanimously to cancel the spring sports season and associated tournaments.

It was a mere formality as Gov. Charlie Baker announced last Tuesday that schools in Massachusetts would remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic school year, which would have ended in mid to late June.

Baker held off for a few weeks on making the decision, hoping new coronavirus case numbers would decrease to the point where the state could begin opening up.

But as the "surge" in both new cases and deaths progressed, it became clear to Baker's administration that putting students in schools would not be a good situation. Additionally, the Massachusetts Teachers Association pushed for the closure of schools for the remainder of the year.

The closure of school means it is not possible for athletes to play sports, putting an end to the proposed shortened, 12-game season the MIAA was hoping to play beginning on May 4. The school closure was set to expire on that day before Baker made his announcement.

The announcement gives a definitive answer the question about whether or not seniors will have their final moments in many of their respective spring sports. The decision cancels baseball, softball, boys lacrosse, girls lacrosse, boys tennis, girls tennis, boys track, girls track, boys volleyball.

There are no proposals for any school sponsored sports to play during the summer, and athletic directors will now have to turn their attention to hopefully playing sports this fall, provided school resumes in September.

In the MIAA announcement, they have made no mention or answered any questions about the status of fall sports. However, athletic directors in Western Massachusetts have begun developing fall schedules, expecting teams will be playing in early September.

The coronavirus first struck the end of winter sports on March 12, when the MIAA was forced to cancel the state finals in both hockey and basketball. Monson High School girls basketball played in the final state semifinal game, losing to Maynard in a Division 4 semifinal at Worcester State University with fans barred from the building. Maynard and other semifinal winners were deemed "co-state champions" by the MIAA.

The spring season was set to begin on March 16, and was first postponed to March 30 as many schools closed down on their own for two weeks. Gov. Baker then shut schools down for three weeks until April 7. In a subsequent decision on March 23, athletics were postponed through April 27. Baker countered with a school closure extension through May 4. The MIAA followed suit with a May 4 starting date for spring sports, agreeing to a shortened season and only holding sectional playoffs that would have concluded before the end of June.

Unlike colleges, which granted athletes an additional year of eligibility for spring sports, seniors in high school will not have that option.

SOCCER



File photos

Players from all over the region have participated in the Pioneer Valley Summer Soccer League for more than 40 years. The league said last week it is closely monitoring the coronavirus situation, but is still hopeful the league will begin play on time in mid-June.

Summer soccer league officials optimistic for season



By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

LUDLOW – In the advent of the high school sports spring season being cancelled and the lack of team sports being played all over the country, sights in Western Massachusetts have now begun looking at whether summer sports will be played.

Summer sports have ballooned over the years as a way to keep all athletes active during the summer months. In the past, there was only summer baseball and soccer. But basketball, field hockey, lacrosse, and even flag football have been added over time.

The Pioneer Valley Summer Soccer League, however, nearly outlasts them all and is considered a crucial battleground for players that are vying for that competitive edge heading into the fall season.

The PVSSL has been in existence for more than 40 years, and there is some question as whether or not the season will begin on

time following the cancellations that have already occurred.

Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow, which hosts the PVSSL finals in early August, is the home of the semi-pro Western Mass. Pioneers. However, their season has been cancelled.

The American Legion baseball program will not have a national tournament or a World Series. However, Legion officials do hope players will have a regular season, especially with the spring baseball season cancelled.

Chris Kolodziej, who along with his wife Dianna, took over the PVSSL in place of his late father, league founder and legendary soccer contributor William Kolodziej, says they are monitoring the situation closely.

Unlike some other leagues, Dianna Kolodziej said last week there is some flexibility in holding the PVSSL season.

"We are not opposed to revising the start and end dates for the leagues, we are will continue

to explore our options to get our players back on the field," said Dianna Kolodziej.

The league typically begins play in mid-June and concludes during the final week of July with a playoff week following that.

PVSSL plays a 10 or 11-game regular season. The league is divided into four divisions, Division A boys, Division B boys, Division A girls, and Division B girls. Larger schools highly competitive or advanced smaller schools usually participate in Division A. Division B usually includes smaller schools or situations where a larger school has two teams.

Last week, Dianna Kolodziej placed a statement on the PVSSL website expressing the optimism of having a normal summer season.

"At this time we are keeping our hopes up and being optimistic that we will be able to move forward with the PVSSL this summer," she stated. "Our plan is to have the a league for the summer.



Chris and I along with our executive board is continuing to monitor the situation with the Corona virus (COVID-19) throughout our nation and around the world. While this is an evolving situation, we are taking the current situation seriously and are following developments very closely.

"We will continue to monitor the situation in real time and will provide a further updates in the near future. We apologize any inconvenience this may have caused however, the safety of our PVSSL family is our highest priority."

Dianna Kolodziej did not specifically say what steps would be taken if the season were to start, including modified rules for social distancing, and eliminating handshake lines after games like a number of sports plan to.

The Kolodzieys state they hope to hold registrations in early May. For more information, Kolodziej can be contacted at ckolodziej@msn.com.

SOCCER

Mass. Golf cancels open event in June

NORTON – Mass Golf has made the decision to cancel the 111th Massachusetts Open, set to take place June 15-17 at Taconic Golf Club in Williamstown, due to the ongoing spread of COVID-19 throughout Massachusetts and the entire country.

All six Mass Open qualifying events have also been canceled, but any exemptions from this year will carry over and be honored for the 2021 Mass Open.

Participants who have registered have received an email detailing how refunds will be processed for the Mass Open and its qualifying events.

The Mass Open is the only Mass Golf event that allows amateur and professionals from any state or country to enter and compete against one another. With a professional purse of \$75,000, the Mass Open offers one of the largest purses in the New England area.

The Four-Ball Championship was also canceled earlier this month, making the Mass Open the second of Mass Golf's Championships to be canceled this year. This also marks the first time since 1945 that there will be no Mass Open played, as the event was not held from 1943-45 due to World War II.

"We care deeply about this historic and signature championship and have made this decision with a heavy heart," said Jesse Menachem, Mass Golf's Executive Director/CEO. "This is an unfortunate situation we're dealing with in the COVID-19 era, but our absolute priority is to protect the health and safety of the Players, Officials, Volunteers, and Spectators as well as the Host Club Staff and Mass Golf Staff involved in the Mass Open and its qualifying events. Taconic has been extremely supportive throughout this decision-making process and we are so appreciative of our long-standing partnership as well as their understanding and flexibility in what is truly an unprecedented time."

The Qualifying schedule was as follows: Pine Brook CC (May 7); CC of Pittsfield (May 13); Kernwood CC (May 18); Ocean Edge R&CC (May 20); Pleasant Valley CC (May 26); and The Bay Club at Mattapoisett (May 28).

Oak Hill CC in Fitchburg will be the host site of the Mass Open in 2021. The club will be celebrating its centennial next year as well.

"We greatly appreciate the continued support of all our Mass Golf Member Clubs who were scheduled to host qualifying, as well as Taconic GC for their willingness to host the Championship," said Kevin Eldridge, Mass Golf's Director of Rules & Competitions. "We look forward to continuing this signature event in 2021."

Taconic was getting set to host the Mass Open for the second time, first hosting it in 1992 when Boston native Andy Morse took home the title. Taconic has also hosted three USGA Championships and four NCAA Championships in its storied history. Jack Nicklaus was 16 when he made the semifinals of the 1956 U.S. Junior Amateur, hosted by Taconic.

Taconic also hosted the Mass Amateur back in 2016, won by Brendan Hunter, of Red Tail GC.

Josh Hillman, the head golf pro at Taconic, said he's disappointed that COVID-19 has led to this cancellation of the Mass Open and other events, and he just wants to see Taconic get another shot at some point.

"Taconic will always be here for Mass Golf, and we hope to get another Championship on the schedule soon," said Hillman, who was named the 2019 Northeastern New York PGA Golf Professional of the Year.

New Hampshire's Michael Martel won the Mass Open last year by edging out Ryan Gendron (Tampa, Florida) by 1 stroke. In the process, he ended Jason Thresher's three-year winning streak in the Mass Open.

MUTINY SOCCER

UWS still hopeful for 2020 season

LUDLOW – United Women's Soccer (UWS) has reaffirmed its intent to play the 2020 season for both UWS and UWS League Two. The start of the season will be delayed in order to align with CDC guidance and we will work with all of our clubs to adjust the regular season schedule. The safety of our

players, fans and staff remain our top priority and we will continue to monitor events and receive guidance from local, state, and national authorities.

"First and foremost, the safety of all the players, staff and supporters will guide any final decision on the 2020 season," said League

Commissioner Joseph Ferrara Jr. "We have been working diligently on different scenarios based on potential timelines. UWS intends to provide a National Championship structure for our member teams as it is the most important service provided by the league. Our investment into this event has made it a tremen-

dous showcase for women's soccer.

The New England Mutiny participate in the UWS and has recently featured several star players from Western Massachusetts.

The USL-Two, a men's semi-professional team, recently announced the Northeast Division cancelled its regular season.

Wilbraham woman pens first children’s book

By Tyler S. Witkop
Staff Writer

WILBRAHAM – A pair of wagging tails led one Wilbraham woman on her first writing adventure, penning her first animal-themed children’s tale.

“Lily and Chip Chip,” by ML Stacy tells the story of a cockapoo, Lily, and a chipmunk, Chip Chip, who become friends despite their drastic difference of species.

Stacy, owner of Stacy’s Cleaners in East Longmeadow, said the idea for the book came from her real-life cockapoo – a cocker spaniel-poodle mix – named Lily, who made a remarkable friendship with a wild chipmunk Stacy calls “Chip Chip.”

“Lily would sit and bark at everything,” Stacy said, including squirrels and neighboring pets. “Then one day I saw her wagging her tail. I went and did some in-

vestigating out on the sun porch and this chipmunk started tearing across my patio. It stopped and looked at Lily, who was wagging her tail.”

Over time, the relationship grew to be a daily occurrence, with Lily stopping by the window, wagging her tail and playing from behind the glass with the wild critter. Stacy said she would say, “Where’s Chip Chip,” and Lily would run to the porch door and look outside, wagging her tail.

Now, three years later, Lily continues to sit and wait for her friend.

“Chip Chip resurfaced about a month ago and Lily started watching,” she said.

After observing the interesting relationship develop, Stacy, a former reading teacher and longtime volunteer in the libraries of Stony Hill and Mile Tree Elementary schools in Wilbraham, decided to put pen to paper and write a fun story for her grand-

children, then ages 2- and 4-years-old.

She conducted research, learning what she could about chipmunks, compiled photographs and assembled the documents into a binder that she showed to her grandchildren, where it was an instant hit.

“This was something on my bucket list,” she said. “One of my dreams.”

The former reading teacher noted that the book uses personification – giving human traits to non-human things – and is appropriate for young audiences, introducing them to the concept.

“I hope young kids enjoy it,” she said. “The book is for ages 1-8, to enjoy and learn a little.”

So far, the reviews have been largely positive.

Last year, Stacy read the story to the second grade class of Judy Kibbe-Ireland at Stony Hill School. When she was through,

she asked the students for their opinions. Only one was negative, from a young boy who didn’t like it because “animals don’t talk.”

Unfortunately, with the current public health emergency limiting social gatherings and closing non-essential business for the time being, Stacy has not been able to promote her book in local bookstores or deliver copies to the school libraries. As a member of the Christ Child Society of Western Massachusetts, however, she has a Free Little Library outside her house (and at other locations locally), with some copies inside.

“Lily and Chip Chip,” published by Dorrance Publishing Co., is available for purchase online at retailers like Amazon, in both e-reader and paperback options.

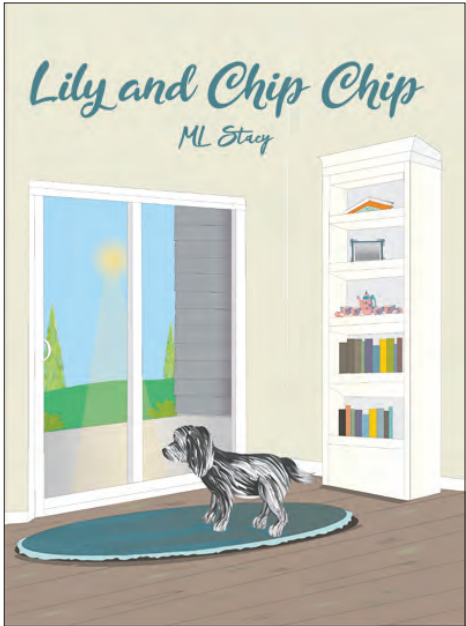


PHOTO SUBMITTED

“Lily and Chip Chip” by ML Stacy, of Wilbraham, is now available for purchase at retailers like Amazon, printed by Dorrance Publishing. The story is inspired by her dog, Lily, and Lily’s wild friend.



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Sports

Modified Series remains postponed amid pandemic

WINCHESTER, N.H. – The Tri Track Open Modified Series event at Monadnock Speedway, scheduled for May 9, has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The health and safety of our race teams, drivers, staff and fans continues to be paramount during this unprecedented situation. The series will continue to abide by guidelines given by local government and public health officials. At this time, Tri Track officials are working together with Monadnock Speedway to come up with a reschedule date that will fit both parties.

Sign-ups ongoing for Quabbin League

REGION – The Quabbin Valley Over-30 Baseball League is seeking new players for 2020 season. The league has six teams, several with open roster spots. Last year, the league voted to allow players age 28 and 29 to be able to join the league, though players under 30 are not eligible to pitch. The cost of the league this season is \$192. For returning players, sign-ups are extended through May 1. New players can also sign up through this date with the draft currently set for May 2. The league hopes to begin play in early June. The season is 15 regular season games plus at least one playoff game. A modified schedule is being worked on by league officials. Games are nine innings and metal (BBCOR -3) or wood bats are allowed. Fields locations are throughout Western Mass. For more information on the league, or if you are interested in registering, go to <https://www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org/>. The league is also in Facebook.

Valley Wheel Baseball looking for new players

REGION – The Valley Wheel Over-30 Baseball League is seeking new players for the upcoming 2020 season. The league is seeking players ages 28 and up. Players turning 28 this year are eligible. However, only players 30 and older can pitch. The league plays 15 regular season games with games being held mostly on Sundays with a couple of weekday games thrown in the mix as well as a special Mother’s Day Saturday game in early May. However, due to the current circumstances, the league schedule has been pushed back. The league still plans to play its season once bans on gatherings are lifted. The league is built on comradery, fair play, and having a good time with friends. If interested in trying out, go to www.valleywheelbaseball.com. The rules of the league and new player forms can be found on the site. For further information, you can contact the league’s commissioner, Jim Nason at wheel12@comcast.net or call him at (413) 433-4308. Tryouts will be taking place in the early weeks of April, weather permitting, with a draft following the tryouts.

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The Journal Register

OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$100, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

Ways to stay hydrated

Water. We all need it—and *know* we need it—for optimum health and wellness, but a shocking few live daily life in a properly hydrated state and certainly not with appropriate consistency. One doctor-driven report revealed that fully 75 percent, a staggering three-fourths majority, of Americans may suffer from chronic dehydration. It went on to underscore that, “Over time, failure to drink enough water can contribute to a wide array of medical complications, from fatigue, joint pain and weight gain to headaches, ulcers, high blood pressure and kidney disease.” Apparently, this is the tip of the proverbial dehydration-induced illness iceberg. “During a normal day, we lose about two liters of water just through breathing, sweat and other bodily functions,” notes board certified internist Dr. Blanca Lizaola-Mayo. “Even while asleep, we can lose over one kilogram (2.2 pounds) of water-weight not just through sweating, but respiration as well. Even air conditioning has drying effects on our body. The health implications of dehydration are vast and can range from mild to severe, including problems with the heart, blood pressure and breathing, headaches and cognitive issues like concentration ... just to name a few. Those who’ve felt that ‘afternoon slump’ should know that dehydration is the number one cause of daytime fatigue. And, it’s important to understand that when we first start to sense thirst, we are already close to two percent dehydrated.”

For all of its importance, proper hydration is a delicate balance to uphold. An Institute of Medicine report cited the fragility of keeping the body duly hydrated, noting, “Over the course of a few hours, body water deficits can occur due to reduced intake or increased water losses from physical activity and environmental (e.g., heat) exposure.” So, a perfectly hydrated body can tip the scales into a dehydrated state in a fairly short amount of time, whether actively (as with exercising), or passively (as with breathing).

Understanding there are commonplace facets of our collective lifestyles that put us at a higher risk of developing mild to severe dehydration, here are some insights and tips from preeminent health experts help you stay happily hydrated:

How Much Water Do You Need?

According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, “Many factors impact how much water you need, including your age, gender, activity level and overall health ... For women, the amount of total water is about 11.5 cups per day and for men about 15.5 cups. These estimates, however, include fluids consumed from both foods and beverages, including water. You typically get about 20 percent of the water you need from the food you eat. Taking that into account, women need about nine cups of fluid per day and men about 12.5 cups in order to help replenish the amount of water that is lost.”

What Are Common Causes of Dehydration?

According to the Mayo Clinic “Sometimes dehydration occurs for simple reasons: You don’t drink enough because you’re sick or busy, or because you lack access to safe drinking water when you’re traveling, hiking or camping.” While certainly not all-inclusive, known causes for dehydration can encompass sweating from exercise and playing a sport; air travel; traversing in overly hot, humid, cold or windy weather conditions; drinking too much coffee and other diuretic beverages; recovering from a hangover; and a litany of other relatively commonplace daily activities.

Do All Fluids Hydrate the Body?

No. The Cleveland Clinic is very clear with its advisory that “Some beverages are better than others at preventing dehydration,” and that “alcoholic and caffeinated beverages, such as coffee, teas and colas, are not recommended for optimal hydration. These fluids tend to pull water from the body and promote dehydration. Fruit juice and fruit drinks may have too many carbohydrates, too little sodium, and may upset the stomach. Adequate hydration will keep your summer activities safer and much more enjoyable.”

What Are Some Benefits of Proper Hydration?

While the benefits of a properly hydrated body are copious, the CDC points to a few top-line health advantages, including keeping

your temperature normal; lubricating and cushioning joints, protecting your spinal cord and other sensitive tissues; and getting rid of wastes through urination, perspiration and bowel movements. Healthline also offers a number of evidence-based health benefits of drinking plenty of water, which include maximizing physical performance; optimized energy levels and mood; and aiding digestion and elimination. Be mindful of water intake, however, as Dr. Lizaola-Mayo warns, “Drinking too much water or fluid can lead to hyponatremia, which causes sodium in the cells to become diluted and too low and can be dangerous—and even life threatening—if untreated.”

What Are Signs of Early or Mild Dehydration?

The Rehydration Project nonprofit organization says that “the degree of dehydration is graded according to signs and symptoms that reflect the amount of fluid lost. In the early stages of dehydration, there are no signs or symptoms. Early features are difficult to detect, but include dryness of mouth and thirst. As dehydration increases, signs and symptoms develop.” According to the organization, symptoms of **early or mild dehydration** include the following: flushed face; extreme thirst; consuming more than normal or the inability to drink; dry, warm skin; the inability to pass urine or reduced amounts (dark, yellow); dizziness made worse when standing; weakness; cramping in the arms and legs; crying with few or no tears; sleepiness or irritableness; sickness; headaches; dry mouth or dry tongue with thick saliva.

What Are Signs of Moderate to Severe Dehydration?

The Rehydration Project also denotes that symptoms of moderate to severe dehydration include low blood pressure; fainting; severe muscle contractions in the arms, legs, stomach, and back; convulsions; a bloated stomach; heart failure; sunken fontanelle—soft spot on a infants head; sunken dry eyes with few or no tears; skin loses its firmness and looks wrinkled; lack of elasticity of the skin (when a bit of skin lifted up stays folded and takes a long time to go back to its normal position); rapid and deep breathing (faster than normal); and a fast, weak pulse. They say that, “In severe dehydration, these effects become more pronounced and the patient may develop evidence of hypovolemic shock, including diminished consciousness; lack of urine output; cool moist extremities; a rapid and feeble pulse (the radial pulse may be undetectable); low or undetectable blood pressure; and peripheral cyanosis. Death follows soon if rehydration is not started quickly.”

Who is At Greatest Risk of Dehydration?

No one is immune to a dehydrated condition, but certain populations are at greater risk. The Mayo Clinic indicates that these vulnerable groups include infants and children, older adults, those with chronic illnesses and people who work or exercise outside. Serious complications can ensue, which they point out can include heat injury (ranging in severity from mild cramps to heat exhaustion or potentially life-threatening heatstroke); urinary tract infections, kidney stones and even kidney failure; seizures due to electrolyte imbalance, sometimes with a loss of consciousness; and low blood volume (hypovolemic) shock. They say it’s time to call your doctor if you or a loved one “has had diarrhea for 24 hours or more; is irritable or disoriented and much sleepier or less active than usual; can’t keep down fluids; and/or has bloody or black stool.”

How Can You Be a Water-Wise Shopper?

The USDA recommends consumers shop smartly, advising us to “Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose beverages at the grocery

store. The food label and ingredients list contain information about added sugars, saturated fat, sodium and calories to help you make better choices.” There are also highly efficacious and economical dehydration avoidance and treatment innovations that can be integrated into one’s lifestyle and used on a daily basis. The experts at SOS Hydration explain that their medically-formulated drink-mix powder accelerates hydration equivalent to an I.V. drip, rehydrating the body fully three-times faster than by drinking water alone. This unique product’s heightened hydration process leverages the body’s digestive “sodium/glucose co-transport system”—an Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT) endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF.

Can Foods Help You Stay Hydrated?

Yes, the body intakes hydration not only from water and other liquids, but foodstuffs as well—some boasting as much 90 percent water content. According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, those high content range include fruits like cantaloupe, strawberries and watermelon; as well as vegetables like lettuce, cabbage, celery, spinach and cooked squash. The organization further states that options with a 70 to 89 percent water content include fruits like bananas, grapes, oranges, pears and pineapples; vegetables such as carrots, cooked broccoli and avocados; and dairy products like yogurt, cottage cheese and ricotta cheese. For drinks, the good folks at EatRight.org advise we focus on unsweetened beverages, like water, in order to limit calories from added sugars, and to use strategies to increase water intake—like adding a flavor enhancer. For this, a fruit-flavored rehydration accelerant like the SOS Hydration drink mix can do tasty double duty.

Can sports drinks undermine hydration?

Yes. Why pay extra money for excess sugar when what you really need are electrolytes? Dr. Lizaola-Mayo says that, “in truth, only a very small amount of sugar is required to help transport electrolytes and water into the cells as part of the sodium glucose co-transport system. In fact, this system is *most* effective when it utilizes one molecule of sugar and one molecule of sodium in combination, which helps create the fastest and most effective way to transport water into the cells for hydration. Even water rehydration and other drinks that do actually claim to utilize the sodium glucose co-transport system have been shown to contain excess sugar to enhance taste, apparently discounting the fact that that this added sugar commensurately increases calorie count and actually undermines cellular H2O absorption. If there is excess sugar in a drink, even one engineered as a rehydration solution, then you can trigger reverse osmosis. This process occurs when there is an incorrect balance of sugar to sodium. Sodium always follows sugar and water always follows sodium. In a drink that is correctly balanced (utilizing the sodium glucose co-transport system) then the water and electrolytes optimally flow into the cells. In high sugar “rehydration” drinks there is too much sugar or the quantity of sodium and, as such, sodium and then water is actually leached from the cells and passed out of the body as urine. This can actually *cause* dehydration—the opposite effect for a rehydration or sports beverage one has spent their hard-earned dollars to purchase.” So whether indoors or out, active or at rest, suffering illness or perfectly healthy, one thing is clear: Keeping your water sources well at hand and ingesting with regularity (and consistency) can have a profoundly beneficial effect on your health and well-being. It’s one easy and highly accessible assist for a multitude of maladies.

May is Electrical Safety Month

Electrical Fires are Second Leading Cause of Home Fire Deaths

Fire officials announced that May is Electrical Safety Month. This year, Electrical Safety Month comes at a time when most of us are at staying home, studying, working, and connecting with family and friends remotely. “We are using more electronic devices at once than normal. Practicing electrical safety is more important now than ever,” said State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey.

Don’t charge your cell phone, laptop in bed

Many fires are caused by cell phones charging underneath pillows and laptops left running on top of the bed covers. These devices are always processing when running or charging. Blocking or covering them can prevent air from cooling the batteries and lead to a fire. Failures of the lithium ion batteries typically used in these devices are more likely to occur during recharging. Charge these devices on a hard surface. “This is an important electrical safety lesson adults should teach children and teens who are using electronics to do their schoolwork, play, and stay connected to friends,” said Fire Chiefs’ Association of Massachusetts President Dennis Condon.

Recently, a hoverboard that was charging malfunctioned and caused a serious fire in Andover.

Don’t overload circuits, power strips

One way to prevent electrical fires is to limit the number of devices plugged into any single outlet or circuit. Plugging too many things into a single outlet or circuit

overloads them and starts fires.

Electrical fires caused 39 deaths, nearly \$200 million in damages (2014-2018)

From 2014 – 2018, Massachusetts fire departments reported 2,794 home fires caused by electrical problems. These fires caused 39 civilian deaths, 92 civilian injuries, 355 fire service injuries and an estimated dollar loss of \$198.3 million.

“Electrical fires are the second leading cause of home fire deaths in Massachusetts,” said Ostroskey. “The best ways to prevent electrical fires are to have a licensed electrician do all work, and have your electrical system reviewed every ten years so you or your tenants won’t be tempted to overload outlets. We need to keep our electrical systems up to date with our ever-increasing electrical needs in this technological age.”

Know the warning signs

“Call your local fire department immediately if you have warning signs such as arcs, sparks, or short circuits,” said Chief Dennis Condon. “Other warning signs include hearing a sizzling or buzzing sound or smelling a vague odor of something burning. Immediate attention to these signs can save lives,” he added, “Firefighters can use thermal imaging technology to see excessive heat inside the walls.”

Call a professional electrician soon if you have any of these warning signs:

- Frequently blown fuses or tripped circuit breakers;
- Dim or flickering lights, bulbs that wear out too fast;
- Overheated plugs, cords or switches;
- Shock or mild tingle – more than normal static electricity;

NFPA urges home fire safety during COVID-19 pandemic

As the public largely remains at home in response to COVID-19, the National Fire Protection Association urges added caution around home fire safety in the days and weeks ahead.

According to NFPA, cooking, heating and electrical equipment are among the leading causes of home fires year-round. “We already see the majority of fires happening in homes,” said Lorraine Carli, vice president of outreach and advocacy at NFPA. “As people spend much more time at home and engage in activities that significantly contribute to the home fire problem, it’s critical that they recognize where potential hazards exist and what they can do to prevent fires.”

Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and is responsible for nearly half, 49 percent, of all reported home fires involving cooking equipment. Moreover, unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires, meaning that home cooking fires occur most often when people aren’t keeping a close eye on what they’re cooking.

“As many households are now dealing with unusual routines and out-of-the-ordinary circumstances, such as kids home from school and parents working from home, there’s greater potential for distracted cooking,” said Carli.

NFPA statistic show that heating equipment is the second-leading cause of home fires, resulting in an average of 52,050 home fires each year. Electrical distribution or lighting equipment is involved in an annual average of 35,100 home fires.

“For much of the country, heating systems are still in use and in many cases, for more hours than usual,” said Carli. “In addition, with everyone at home, people

may be using the same outlets to charge phones, laptops and other digital equipment, which also presents a fire hazard.”

With these concerns in mind, NFPA reminds the public to use best practices for staying fire-safe during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond

Stay in the kitchen while frying, boiling, grilling or broiling food. If one leaves the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.

If some one is simmering, baking or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking and the cook should use a timer to remind themselves they are cooking.

Keep anything that can catch fire, oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains away from a stovetop.

Make sure all handles are turned inward, away from where someone can grab a hot handle or tip a pan over.

Be on alert. Anyone who is sleepy or has consumed alcohol, refrain from using the stove or stovetop.

If there are young children in the home, create a “kid-free zone” of at least three feet (1 meter) around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.

Keep anything that can burn at least three-feet (one meter) away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove or portable space heater.

Have a three-foot (one meter) “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.

Never use an oven to heat a home.

Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.

Always use the right kind of

· Loose outlets or unusually warm or faulty outlets or switches.

Give electrical systems a tune-up very decade

Extension cords are designed for temporary use, but many people leave them in place permanently and forget about them. Plugging many things into a single outlet or reliance on extension cords are signs it is time to have an electrician review your system. Fire officials recommend having a licensed electrician review a home’s electrical system every 10 years. Small upgrades and simple safety checks such as making sure outdoor grounds and connections are secure can prevent larger problems without breaking the bank.

Avoid using extension cords

Another frequent cause of fires is using extension cords. Avoid using them if possible, but remember they are for temporary use only and not designed to substitute for the wall outlet. Plug all heat-producing appliances like space heaters, irons, and toasters, directly into the wall outlet; otherwise, the safety mechanism of circuit breakers and fuses is by-passed. Do not link extension cords together; each connection is another possible failure point.

Keep furniture from pinching cords

Heavy furniture can easily pinch an electrical cord and over time that can lead to a fire. Do not run cords underneath rugs; it is both a trip and a fire hazard. Unplug appliances by grasping the plug; do not pull by the cord.

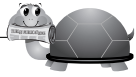
For more information on electrical fire safety in English and Spanish go to <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/electrical-fire-safety>.

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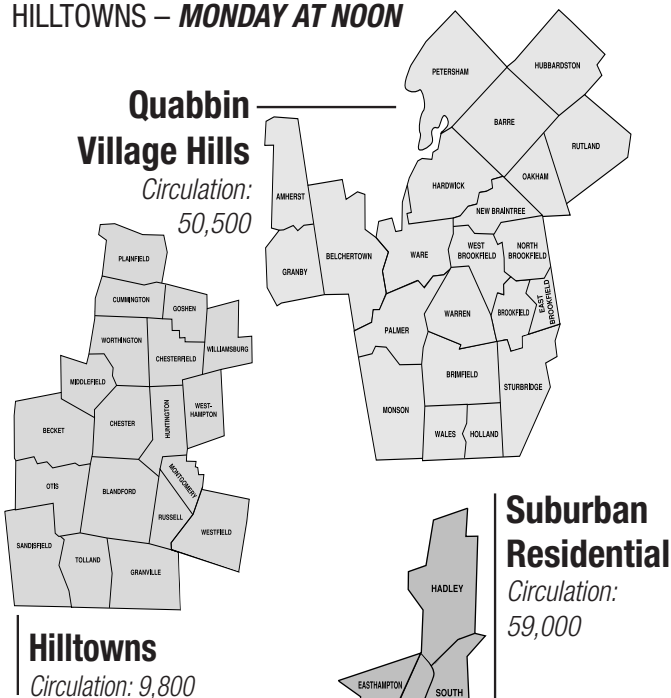
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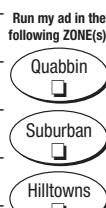
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Dakin Humane Society caring for pets from COVID-positive homes

Organization Urges People to Have Pet Guardians Designated and Supplies Gathered in the Event of Unexpected Hospitalization

SPRINGFIELD – Dakin Humane Society has recently taken in two cats and four dogs from households where people have been hospitalized with COVID-19, through its Safety Plan for Animals (SPAN) Program, becoming one of the first in the first in the Commonwealth to do so.

According to Executive Director Carmine DiCenso, “In one case, a man was in his third day at the hospital before he was able to communicate with staff and tell them that he had a dog alone at his Shutesbury home. His daughter, who lives several hours away, notified us, and we worked with local law enforcement to safely remove the dog from the home and get her to Dakin. Sampa, the dog, is doing well in our care. Sadly, the man passed away within a matter of days but he had peace of mind knowing his pet was safe and is being cared for.”

Dakin’s SPAN Program was created several years ago to provide temporary shelter for pets belonging to people who were experiencing different crises, including fleeing an abusive household, losing a home due to a fire, or facing an unexpected stay in a hospital or nursing facility due to a medical problem. Now Dakin is using the Program to help pets whose people are being hospitalized with COVID-19, and the organization is following guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) regarding their housing. There

is a limited number of spots available.

In these days of the COVID-19 pandemic, people with pets, especially those who live alone, need to have plans in place for their pet’s safety should they face an unexpected hospitalization due to the virus, says DiCenso. They need to designate a friend or family member who could step in and take care of their pets if they can’t, and a back-up for that person as well.

“People may think they’re not at risk because of their age or their health, but if there’s one thing we’ve seen with COVID-19, it’s that nothing is certain, and anyone can end up hospitalized and fighting this virus. COVID-19 is considered a human crisis, but it can also become a pet crisis in some cases. It’s always better for your pet to be able to stay home and be cared for by a friend or family member than go to a shelter.”

DiCenso continued, “It’s also a good idea for anyone with a pet to have a pet supply kit prepared. Ideally it would have a 2-week supply of pet medications, their food and bottled water as well as food bowls, leashes, toys and comfort items, medical records, important phone numbers and a recent photo of your pet.”

Dakin Humane Society delivers effective, innovative services that improve the lives of animals in need and the people who care about them from its two locations in Leverett and Springfield, MA. The organization shelters, treats and fosters more than 20,000 animals each year and has performed over 92,000 spay/neuter surgeries since 2009, making it New England’s largest spay/neuter provider. Dakin is a local non-profit organization that relies solely on contributions from individuals and businesses that care about animals to bring its services to the community. For more information, visit www.dakinhumane.org.

“Diary of a Wombat” to be read live on Facebook

AMHERST – Continuing its digital offerings, the UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center will present a live family-friendly bedtime reading on Facebook featuring Australia-based Monkey Baa Theatre Company.

Monkey Baa will join the Fine Arts Center on its Facebook page Tuesday, May 5, at 7 p.m. to read “Diary of a Wombat,” the iconic children’s book that the theater company was meant to present as a live stage production at the FAC. In addition to reading the book, Monkey Baa, Director Eva Di Cesare will share the backstory of the company’s connection to the book’s author, Jackie French, and picture book illustrator Bruce Whatley. At the end of the presentation, Monkey Baa Theatre members host a talk back and will be able to answer questions from the audience. Pre-event drawing activities and an educator resource guide are available for download at www.fineartscenter.com/wombat.

Since it’s billed as a bedtime reading, the Fine Arts Center invites young participants to ponder the question: If animals wore pajamas what would they look like? Before the reading, viewers are encouraged to draw their favorite animals wearing PJs and share it with the Fine Arts Center on Facebook during the live event. Those who share will be entered to win a wombat prize pack including a copy of the book, a stuffed wombat, and more from our friends at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art.

Millions of young people around the world have adored the multi award-winning picture book, “Diary of a Wombat” written by Australian Children’s Laureate, Jackie French, and illustrated by Bruce Whatley. During the reading, you’ll meet Mothball, the naughtiest wombat in Australia. Bored with her daily routine, Mothball goes in search of food and shelter, creating chaos in the lives of the humans around her. This delightful story illustrates what happens when an animal’s natural habitat is overtaken by humans. But fear not, Mothball discovers that with a bit of persistence, the humans are quite easily trained. Monkey Baa is Australia’s leading professional theatre company for young audiences, based in the ARA Darling Quarter Theatre in Sydney, and has conducted over 27 national tours to 135 regional and remote communities across every state and territory of Australia, four international tours and over 2,500 performances, engaging with over 1.3 million young people.

This event coincides with Children’s Book Week (May 4 to 10) as well as Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4 to 8), and is sponsored by The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, WRSI 93.9, and Hotel UMass. For more information, visit www.fineartscenter.com/wombat or the Fine Arts Center’s Facebook page www.facebook.com/UMass-FineArtsCenter.

HCC, Westfield State pair up for housing program

REGION – Holyoke Community College and Westfield State University are partners in a state-sponsored pilot program that provides free campus housing and meal plans to students struggling with homelessness and food insecurity.

Westfield and HCC were the sixth college team chosen for the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education’s Campus Housing Security Pilot program, which matches a public university with a nearby community college to offer free room and board for up to five students.

Beginning with the spring 2020 semester, two first-year students from HCC, as well as a senior, junior, and sophomore from Westfield State, have been living in a dormitory on the Westfield campus with full campus meal plans. The program also provides for free public transportation from Westfield to Holyoke, as well as case management services and other resources through the Shine Young Adult Housing Program in Springfield.

Although the arrangements have been complicated since the coronavirus outbreak, the governor’s stay-at-home advisory and the transition to remote instruction at both colleges, the students remain housed on the

Westfield campus.

The program started last year with the pairing of Bridgewater State University and Massasoit Community College; Framingham State University and MassBay Community College; Worcester State University and Quinsigamond Community College; and UMass Lowell and Middlesex Community College.

This year two more college teams were added: Salem State University and North Shore Community College; and Westfield State and HCC.

“An unfortunate byproduct of growing income inequality in Massachusetts is the rise of hunger and homelessness among our students,” said Carlos Santiago, commissioner of Higher Education. “I am thrilled to see the expansion of our pilot program to serve this vulnerable population and commend our campus leaders for committing resources to fund meal plans and offer academic supports that will increase the likelihood that these students succeed in earning college credentials.”

The goal of the program is to help struggling students gain stability in their lives so they can complete their college degrees and make a successful transition to permanent housing and meaningful careers.

ingful careers.

“A lot of people are surprised to hear that housing insecurity and homelessness are a reality on many college campuses,” said HCC president, Christina Royal. “In order for our students to succeed academically, we must address some of the challenges they face with their basic needs. This partnership with Westfield will provide stability for these students so they can focus on their studies.”

The state is providing \$48,000 per regional campus team to cover the cost for five beds in a university residence hall, with additional block grant funding from the Dept. of Higher Education to cover any remaining housing costs.

Each participating institution covers the cost of its own students’ meal plans, which for the two HCC students is being paid by the HCC Foundation, the college’s nonprofit fundraising corporation. The five students will also continue to live on the Westfield campus during vacation breaks and summer months. To be eligible for the program, they must be enrolled full time and be in good academic standing.

“We are proud to help address an increasing societal issue by assisting some students with

housing and meals on campus through this thoughtful, state-initiated program,” said Gloria Lopez, vice president for Student Affairs at Westfield State. “We are fortunate and pleased that we are able to accommodate these students, as we eagerly welcome them to our supportive learning environment and inclusive campus community.”

According to the Dept. of Higher Education, Massachusetts is the first state to address these issues as a matter of intentional, state-level public policy, thanks to a unique partnership among three state agencies: the DHE, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). Through its Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth, EOHHS is funding the annual stipends to cover the cost of dorm housing for up to five community college and state university students at six residential campuses.

A seventh pilot program, launched in fall 2019, provides off-campus, single-room occupancy for up to 11 homeless students attending public colleges and universities within the city of Boston.

HCC to hold free digital literacy program

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College will run a free online program starting Tuesday, May 5, for people, who want to sharpen their digital literacy skills to become more effective remote workers and learners.

“How to Work and Learn Online” offered through HCC’s Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development, is a four-part workshop series that will be conducted in a live, interactive, streaming forum on May 5, May 7, May 12, and May 14, from 1 to 3 p.m.

Participants will learn how to navigate computer settings, create and organize files and safely use the internet and digital communication tools such as Zoom. Sessions will cover best practices for being an effective online learner including tips on study habits, expectations of online learning and how to use Google Drive and other computer applications.

The course was developed and will be taught by Jose Pedraza, assistant coordinator of HCC’s Gill Community Technology Center, which promotes technology literacy for HCC education and workforce training programs.

“Our staff and faculty have been working hard to find creative ways to help students and people from the community during these challenging times,” said Michele Cabral, HCC executive director of professional development and corporate learning. “Knowledge of computers and online literacy have become more important than ever lately. This course is really designed for anyone – students, parents with young children, people forced to work at home because of COVID-19 restrictions and others who want to develop a greater mastery of digital technology.”

Those enrolled will be sent a link to the class, which they can join using any device with an internet connection, such as a desktop computer, laptop, Chromebook or smartphone.

For more information or to register, people may contact Valentyna Semyrog at 413-552-2123 or vsemyrog@hcc.edu.

Grant extends free HCC college-prep program

HOLYOKE — Holyoke Community College has been awarded a \$450,000 state grant to extend its free college preparation program, Transition to College and Careers, for three more years.

The grant from the state Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) allocates \$150,000 a year for the next three fiscal years – 2021, 2022 and 2023 – with the college providing an additional 30 percent match.

Transition to College and Careers, also known as TCC, is a free, adult education program that helps students 18 or older prepare for college and identify a career path. Coursework includes intensive academic preparation in reading and writing, math, study strategies, and computers.

The program is designed for all adults, including students with high school equivalency certificates, those who have completed English as a Second or Other Language or other adult literacy programs, and those who have been out of school for a long time and want to return.

“TCC is really a bridge for them so they feel like they understand what college is about and gain confidence in their abilities to manage the academic workload,” said TCC director Marie Troppe.

There is no cost to students for the

classes or course materials.

“The grant and the college cover everything,” Troppe said.

HCC runs daytime and evening TCC groups during fall, spring and summer terms. All classes meet on the main HCC campus at 303 Homestead Ave.

The program serves 60 to 75 students a year.

The grant funds TCC instruction for about 30 of those students a year (15 each fall and spring), with priority given to students who come from other DESE-funded adult education programs, such as the Literacy Project, the Care Center, the Center for New Americans, the Community Education Center, the Valley Opportunity Council or one of HCC’s many other community partners.

As an additional incentive, the DESE grant also pays for 12 college credits for students who go on to enroll at HCC or another college.

“That’s a tremendous savings and an incredible incentive,” said Troppe. “Twelve credits is essentially four free college classes for students who complete the TCC program.”

The next series of TCC classes at HCC will begin in September.

For more information or to apply for the program, please visit hcc.edu/tcc or send an email to tcc@hcc.edu.

BUSINESS

Turley Publications is liberal with regard to its business coverage policies, but we do have some standards folks need to understand. First, local businesses and merchants are just as much institutions in our towns as the library and schools. Without them, there are no towns.

We will feature coverage of local businesses that are new, have a major expansion, moving, closing, under new management or ownership, celebrating a milestone anniversary, or have been thrust into the news realm. Merchants can request that coverage through the editor, or for our existing advertising clients, through their ad representatives.

For more information on business coverage for The Journal Register, please email dfarmer@turley.com.

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Public Notices

TOWN OF MONSON LEGAL NOTICE

In accordance with Chapter 40A, M.G.L. s11, the Monson Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing **Tuesday May 19, 2020 at 7:05 P.M. REMOTELY**, on the application of Vertex Tower Assets, LLC for a Special Permit as provided by Section 6.14, Wireless Communications Facilities Regulations of the Monson Zoning Bylaws. The applicant proposes to install a 100’ tall monopole style wireless communications tower at 94 Cote Rd, Monson, MA, Map 052, Parcel 028, owned by Ronald P. Ouimet & Amy S. Ouimet, in the Rural Residential district. A copy of the application is on file with the Planning Board.

Zoom Remote Participation Information:

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Craig Sweitzer, Chairman

4/30, 5/07/2020

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-8600 Docket No. HD20P0652EA Estate of: Robert G. Freeman Date of Death: 8/9/2019

INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **David Meurisse** of Monson, MA a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

David Meurisse of Monson, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court

in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner. 4/30/2020

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD20P0519EA

Estate of: Elizabeth Ann Lisowski Date of Death: 01/26/2020 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons: A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by: **Richard A. Lisowski** of Wales, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Richard A. Lisowski** of Wales, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in an **unsupervised** administration.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on **05/20/2020**.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an Affidavit of Objections within thirty (30) days of the return date, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS

UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court. Date: April 22, 2020

Suzanne T. Seguin

Register of Probate

4/30/2020

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Rare-event Physicists in Italy, Canada and U.S. Design Simplified Ventilator Adaptable to Local-source Materials

UMass Amherst physicist works with global team sharing technology against COVID-19

AMHERST - To address the COVID-19 pandemic, particle physicist Andrea Pocar at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and an international team of “Dark Matter” scientists are now designing and circulating plans for a simplified mechanical ventilator. They offer an adaptable device using parts found almost anywhere, Pocar says.

He says the group already has seen „a lot of interest” from such countries as India, South Africa, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico, Iran and Indonesia. Pocar is particularly interested in helping to introduce U.S. firms and organizations who may wish to build the ventilators as well as in securing regulatory approval.

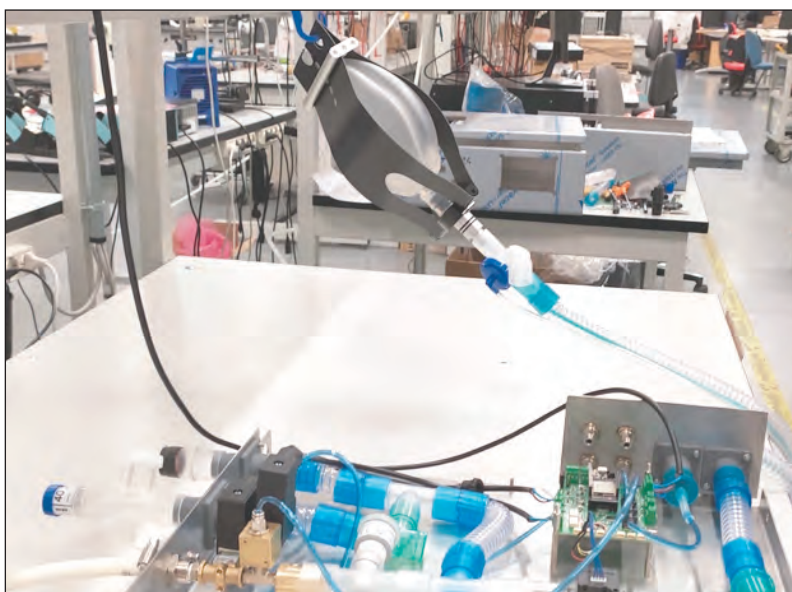


Andrea Pocar

He adds it is not such a stretch to imagine physicists creating respiratory-assist machines, noting that physicists are trained to simplify complex problems and not give up until they have a plan.

Further, Pocar says, “One of the things in particular about experimental particle physicists is that we build our own stuff, one-of-a-kind instruments, and we program unique electronics for our experiments. We regularly involve engineers, and people like me who specifically work on dark matter and rare-event physics work with gases and fluids all the time. We’ve spent a lifetime using high-end pressure- and flow-control valves and sensors, and we know what clean means, without contamination. Turning to solve a problem like a ventilator felt very natural.”

The project initiative came first from Italian physicists led by Cristiano Galbiati of Princeton University and Gran Sasso Science Institute L’Aquila, a college classmate



of Pocar’s. Galbiati also recruited astrophysicist Arthur McDonald of Queen’s College, Ontario, and others from “DarkSide 20k,” an international astrophysics dark matter detection program. More than 250 physicists, engineers, physicians and others in 12 countries are now collaborating online in subgroups. Like Pocar, many had spent the past decade or more designing instruments to collect, purify and liquefy argon for their detectors.

The scientists call their device the Mechanical Ventilator Milano (MVM). It uses electricity and compressed oxygen or oxygen-plus-medical air, valves, tubes, connectors to a hospital supply and expiration tubes. Pocar says, „The MVM device was designed with supplies that are readily available in Italy, Europe, Canada and the U.S. Each country will have to adapt it to what they can cope with at a time when global supply chains

are disrupted.”

One key MVM group is developing and programming the ventilator’s control and monitoring unit, while Pocar is working with the project’s international engagement committee. Their task is to manage inquiries now coming from many countries, to identify where project help is needed and to provide guidance for those who want to build open-source, patent-free devices in their region.

Another of the project’s working groups is shepherding the device through two regulatory processes - the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s evaluation/acceptance process and the U.K.-based Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency standards used in Europe for emergency equipment, Pocar notes. “Governments will eventually have to buy these things, and they must meet strict standards. We’ve tried to anticipate those so it can quickly pass an accelerated certification process. They’re also working on a user manual, documentation, parts list and standard international symbols that must be used.”

“FDA certification will be key because other agencies will recognize that process and trust it, shortening

the time the MVM could be used on patients that need it,” he adds.

In addition to Italian government officials and scientists at Health Canada and Canadian national laboratories, the MVM team is working with the lead U.S. national lab for accelerator-based particle physics, the Department of Energy’s FermiLab in the Chicago area, and with the U.S. Air Force on FDA certification of the device, Pocar says.

He emphasizes that everyone connected with MVM has pledged to strictly guard against any privatization or production-for-profit of the device. “We are all working as hard as we can to prevent anyone from trying to patent this. We are publishing our designs and plans on open-source platforms following the CERN Open Hardware License and making it known that it must be kept open.”

Pocar says his next step is to try to facilitate wide availability of the device design and documentation in other countries and to “try to facilitate as much as possible the seeding of entrepreneurship around this device. The intellectual property behind it would come for free for whoever wants to use it.”

STCC Respiratory Care program lends ventilators to hospitals

SPRINGFIELD - Springfield Technical Community College’s Respiratory Care program is lending its five ventilators to area hospitals preparing for a surge in patients due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Christopher Scott, dean of the School of Health and Patient Simulation, said STCC is prepared to donate or lend any equipment hospitals need during the coronavirus emergency. The school recently donated all of its personal protective equipment to area hospitals, medical centers and first responders.

STCC is lending its ventilators to Baystate Medical Center and Mercy Medical Center, both in Springfield, and to Holyoke Medical Center.

“We knew that hospitals are preparing for an influx of patients and will need ventilators,” Scott said. “We work closely with

Baystate, Mercy and Holyoke on a regular basis. We are grateful for all their support over the years, so we are happy to let them use whatever equipment we have to help their patients.”

Scott said STCC respiratory care students have trained on the ventilators, which are the same type the hospitals use.

“Our semester is winding down, and we feel these vents can be put to better use on the front lines in hospitals,” Scott said.

Ventilators are used by some patients infected with COVID-19 who have breathing problems. The breathing devices have been in demand since the start of the pandemic. Ventilators are one of the tools used to help some COVID-19 patients.

The coronavirus crisis has put a spotlight on the profession of respiratory care. In addition to helping patients with

COVID-19, respiratory therapists treat people suffering from a range of chronic respiratory diseases, including asthma, emphysema, pneumonia, cystic fibrosis, sleep apnea and chronic bronchitis.

The two-year associate degree program at STCC trains students in the treatment, management, diagnosis and care of patients with diseases related to the heart and lungs. Training includes the use of therapeutic gases, ventilator support, breathing exercises, aerosol administration, medications, humidification and maintenance of airways.

Graduates of the program can transfer to a four-year college or university to continue their education or begin working at a hospital or other health care facility.

Over the last several weeks, several STCC respiratory care students applied

for limited permit licenses to work at area hospitals and help meet the demand to help patients.

Respiratory therapy is one of the fastest growing fields in health care. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, respiratory therapists will continue to be in high demand at hospitals and medical facilities. Projected job growth is 21 percent between 2018 and 2028, which is much faster than the growth rate for all occupations (5 percent).

Interested in applying to the respiratory care program at STCC? Visit stcc.edu/ apply. If you have questions about the program, please email Esther Perrelli Brookes, department chair, at eperrelli@stcc.edu



Esther Perrelli Brookes, left, Department Chair, Respiratory Care, stands next to one of the ventilators that has been lent to an area hospital. Also pictured are respiratory care faculty Scott M. Frink, center, and Nfamaara “Fams” Taal.

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